BEST STORIES TO TELL TO CHILDREN

BY SARA CONE BRYANT

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BEST STORIES TO TELL TO CHILDREN

"'YOU CAN'T CATCH ME, I'M THE GINGERBREAD MAN!'" (PAGE 95)

Best Stories to Tell to Children

BY

SARA CONE BRYANT
(*Mrs. Theodore F. Borst*)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
PATTEN WILSON

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PREFACE

This foreword is written from the Playtime Country of our Eastern States, the coast of Maine. Here the little brown rabbit waits confidingly by the roadside till the human animal is all but abreast of him. The squirrel pelts with broken acorn cups the intruder who discovers his favorite red oak. Sea gulls soar overhead so close that one can trace the outline of their slender, fish-like bodies hanging between the outspread curve of wings. Wild roses and thick mats of low-bush blueberries cover the pastured clearings; bunch-berries, scarlet in the deep moss, tuft the shadowy carpet under the red spruce and the balsam fir. It is a land of leisure and of the merry heart.

Such a land I would might unfold about the open fire in the dreaming eyes of every child who hears these little stories told. For there is wisdom found,

and true content, — in leisure with the merry heart.

The stories in this book, some very old and unchanged, some new, and some changed from an older form, grew into their present shape by the process of being told to children many, many times. They were shortened or lengthened, modelled and remodelled, by the conscious or instinctive adaptation of the story-teller to the listener. A few of them took this form long since, and are included here because children of many generations have loved to hear them thus, but the greater part are the fruit of my own story-telling years, and, because of their good fortune in the favor of English-speaking children of to-day, have served as model forms for teachers and mothers all over the world.

All of them, with others, are included in one or the other of my two earlier books, "How to Tell Stories to Children" and "Stories to Tell to Children," both of which are used chiefly by persons in some way actively

concerned in the education of children, and both of which deal largely with the aims and method of story-telling as an art.

It is the belief of the publishers, here and in England, that some of the stories ought to be printed separately from these books on method, for the more ready access of children themselves and those whose interest is of a wholly untechnical sort. This is the more desirable because stories which are especially adapted to be told are equally charming for reading aloud or to one's self. The converse is not true: stories written to be read are rarely suitable for the story-teller's art until they have been skilfully adapted. In other words, those tales which can be and have been told with success are in a sense the chosen few; they, of all the world's stories, are most charming to hear or to read.

We, therefore, the publishers and I, have chosen, out of the tested story-telling favorites of the children who made my earlier public, this handful of the very dearest, to give to the children themselves. We hope

the mothers and big sisters, and of course the fathers and good uncles and aunts, will like to tell or read these tales to the littler ones. But we also trust that many a studious little head will bend over the pages of this book while the reading child absorbs its stories all for himself, and traces in Mr. Patten Wilson's fascinating pictures the adventures of its mimic world. For it is to the children and their home friends that we send it out, with greetings from the Playtime Land to the Playtime spirit, everywhere.

SARA CONE BRYANT BORST.

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Best Stories to Tell to Children

THE STORY OF THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

There were once three little pigs, who started out to seek their fortune. The first that went off met a man with a bundle of straw, and said to him: —

"Please, man, give me that straw to build me a house."

Which the man did, and the little pig built a house with it. Presently came along a wolf, and knocked at the door, and said: —

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

To which the pig answered: —

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny-chin-chin."

The wolf then answered to that: —

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew his house in, and ate up the little pig.

The second little pig met a man with a bundle of furze, and said: —

"Please, man, give me that furze to build a house."

Which the man did, and the pig built his house. Then along came the wolf, and said: —

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny-chin-chin."

"Then I'll puff, and I'll huff, and I'll blow your house in."

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed, and at last he blew the house down, and he ate up the little pig.

The third little pig met a man with a load of bricks, and said: —

"Please, man, give me those bricks to build a house with."

So the man gave him the bricks, and he built his

house with them. So the wolf came, as he did to the other little pigs, and said: —

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny-chin-chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well, he huffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed and huffed; but he could *not* get the house down. When he found that he could not, with all his huffing and puffing, blow the house down, he said: —

"Little pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips."

"Where?" said the little pig.

"Oh, in Mr. Smith's home-field, and if you will be ready to-morrow morning I will call for you, and we will go together, and get some for dinner."

"Very well," said the little pig, "I will be ready. What time do you mean to go?"

"Oh, at six o'clock."

Well, the little pig got up at five, and got the turnips before the wolf came (which he did about six) and said: —

"Little pig, are you ready?"

The little pig said: "Ready! I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner."

The wolf felt very angry at this, but thought that he would be up to the little pig somehow or other, so he said: —

"Little pig, I know where there is a nice apple tree."

"Where?" said the pig.

"Down at Merry-garden," replied the wolf, "and if you will not deceive me I will come for you at five o'clock to-morrow, and get some apples."

Well, the little pig bustled up the next morning at four o'clock, and went off for the apples, hoping to get back before the wolf came; but he had further to go, and had to climb the tree, so that just as he was coming down from it, he saw the wolf coming, which, as

you may suppose, frightened him very much. When the wolf came up he said: —

"Little pig, what! are you here before me? Are they nice apples?"

"Yes, very," said the little pig. "I will throw you down one."

And he threw it so far that, while the wolf was gone to pick it up, the little pig jumped down and ran home. The next day the wolf came again, and said to the little pig: —

"Little pig, there is a fair at Shanklin this afternoon; will you go?"

"Oh, yes," said the pig, "I will go; what time shall you be ready?"

"At three," said the wolf. So the little pig went off before the time, as usual, and got to the fair, and bought a butter-churn, which he was going home with when he saw the wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got into the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it round, and it rolled down the hill

with the pig in it, which frightened the wolf so much that he ran home without going to the fair. He went to the little pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which came down the hill past him. Then the little pig said: —

"Hah, I frightened you, then! I had been to the fair and bought a butter-churn, and when I saw you, I got into it, and rolled down the hill."

Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he *would* eat up the little pig, and that he would get down the chimney after him. When the little pig saw what he was about, he hung on the pot full of water, and made up a blazing fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the wolf; so the little pig put on the cover again in an instant, boiled him up and ate him for supper, and lived happy ever afterwards.

"THE LITTLE PIG . . . TOOK OFF THE COVER, AND IN FELL THE WOLF"

THE STORY OF THE THREE BEARS

Once upon a time there were Three Bears, who lived together in a house of their own, in a wood. One of them was a Little Small Wee Bear, and one was a Middle-sized Bear, and the other was a Great Huge Bear. They had each a pot for their porridge, — a little pot for the Little Small Wee Bear, and a middle-sized pot for the Middle-sized Bear, and a great pot for the Great Huge Bear. And they had each a chair to sit in, — a little chair for the Little Small Wee Bear, and a middle-sized chair for the Middle-sized Bear, and a great chair for the Great Huge Bear. And they had each a bed to sleep in, — a little bed for the Little Small Wee Bear, and a middle-sized bed for the Middle-sized Bear, and a great bed for the Great Huge Bear.

One day, after they had made the porridge for their breakfast, and poured it into their porridge-pots,

they walked out into the wood while the porridge was cooling, that they might not burn their mouths, by beginning too soon to eat it. And while they were walking, a little girl named Goldilocks came to the house. She had never seen the little house before, and it was such a strange little house that she forgot all the things her mother had told her about being polite: first she looked in at the window, and then she peeped in at the keyhole; and seeing nobody in the house, she lifted the latch. The door was not fastened, because the Bears were good Bears, who did nobody any harm, and never suspected that anybody would harm them. So Goldilocks opened the door, and went in; and well pleased she was when she saw the porridge on the table. If Goldilocks had remembered what her mother had told her, she would have waited till the Bears came home, and then, perhaps, they would have asked her to breakfast; for they were good Bears, — a little rough, as the manner of Bears is, but for all that very good-natured and hospitable.

But Goldilocks forgot, and set about helping herself.

So first she tasted the porridge of the Great Huge Bear, and that was too hot. And then she tasted the porridge of the Middle-sized Bear, and that was too cold. And then she went to the porridge of the Little Small Wee Bear, and tasted that; and that was neither too hot nor too cold, but just right; and she liked it so well that she ate it all up.

Then Goldilocks sat down in the chair of the Great Huge Bear, and that was too hard for her. And then she sat down in the chair of the Middle-sized Bear, and that was too soft for her. And then she sat down in the chair of the Little Small Wee Bear, and that was neither too hard nor too soft, but just right. So she seated herself in it, and there she sat till the bottom of the chair came out, and down she came, plump upon the ground.

Then Goldilocks went upstairs into the bedchamber in which the Three Bears slept. And first

she lay down upon the bed of the Great Huge Bear; but that was too high at the head for her. And next she lay down upon the bed of the Middle-sized Bear, and that was too high at the foot for her. And then she lay down upon the bed of the Little Small Wee Bear; and that was neither too high at the head nor at the foot, but just right. So she covered herself up comfortably, and lay there till she fell fast asleep.

By this time the Three Bears thought their porridge would be cool enough; so they came home to breakfast. Now Goldilocks had left the spoon of the Great Huge Bear standing in his porridge.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!" said the Great Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice. And when the Middle-sized Bear looked at his, he saw that the spoon was standing in it too.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!" said the Middle-sized Bear in his middle-sized voice.

Then the Little Small Wee Bear looked at his, and

"SHE LIKED IT SO WELL THAT SHE ATE IT ALL UP"

there was the spoon in the porridge-pot, but the porridge was all gone.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE, AND HAS EATEN IT ALL UP!" said the Little Small Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Upon this, the Three Bears, seeing that some one had entered their house, and eaten up the Little Small Wee Bear's breakfast, began to look about them. Now Goldilocks had not put the hard cushion straight when she rose from the chair of the Great Huge Bear.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" said the Great Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And Goldilocks had squatted down the soft cushion of the Middle-sized Bear.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" said the Middle-sized Bear, in his middle-sized voice.

And you know what Goldilocks had done to the third chair.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR AND HAS SAT THE BOTTOM OUT OF IT!" said the Little Small Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Then the Three Bears thought it necessary that they should make further search; so they went upstairs into their bed-chamber. Now Goldilocks had pulled the pillow of the Great Huge Bear out of its place.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED!" said the Great Huge Bear, in his great, gruff voice.

And Goldilocks had pulled the bolster of the Middle-sized Bear out of its place.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED!" said the Middle-sized Bear, in his middle-sized voice.

And when the Little Small Wee Bear came to look at his bed, there was the bolster in its place; and the pillow in its place upon the bolster; and upon the pillow was the shining, yellow hair of little Goldilocks!

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED, — AND

HERE SHE IS!" said the Little Small Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Goldilocks had heard in her sleep the great, rough, gruff voice of the Great Huge Bear; but she was so fast asleep that it was no more to her than the roaring of wind or the rumbling of thunder. And she had heard the middle-sized voice of the Middle-sized Bear, but it was only as if she had heard some one speaking in a dream. But when she heard the little, small, wee voice of the Little Small Wee Bear, it was so sharp, and so shrill, that it awakened her at once. Up she started, and when she saw the Three Bears on one side of the bed, she tumbled herself out at the other, and ran to the window. Now the window was open, because the Bears, like good, tidy Bears as they were, always opened their bed-chamber window when they got up in the morning.

Out little Goldilocks jumped, and ran away home to her mother, as fast as ever she could.

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER PIG

An old woman was sweeping her house, and she found a little crooked sixpence. "What," said she, "shall I do with this little sixpence? I will go to market, and buy a little pig."

As she was coming home, she came to a stile; but the piggy would n't go over the stile.

She went a little further, and she met a dog. So she said to him, "Dog, dog, bite pig; piggy won't go over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." But the dog would n't.

She went a little further, and she met a stick. So she said: "Stick! stick! beat dog! dog won't bite pig; piggy won't go over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." But the stick would n't.

She went a little further, and she met a fire. So she said: "Fire! fire! burn stick! stick won't beat

dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." But the fire would n't.

She went a little further, and she met some water. So she said: "Water! water! quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." But the water would n't.

She went a little further, and she met an ox. So she said: "Ox! ox! drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." But the ox would n't.

She went a little further, and she met a butcher. So she said: "Butcher! butcher! kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." But the butcher would n't.

She went a little further, and she met a rope. So

she said: "Rope! rope! hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." Bůt the rope would n't.

She went a little further, and she met a rat. So she said: "Rat! rat! gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." But the rat would n't.

She went a little further, and she met a cat. So she said: "Cat! cat! kill rat; rat won't gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night." But the cat said to her, "If you will go to yonder cow, and fetch me a saucer of milk,

I will kill the rat." So away went the old woman to the cow.

But the cow said to her, "If you will go to yonder hay-stack, and fetch me a handful of hay, I'll give you the milk." So away went the old woman to the hay-stack; and she brought the hay to the cow.

As soon as the cow had eaten the hay, she gave the old woman the milk; and away she went with it in a saucer to the cat.

As soon as the cat had lapped up the milk, the cat began to kill the rat; the rat began to gnaw the rope; the rope began to hang the butcher; the butcher began to kill the ox; the ox began to drink the water; the water began to quench the fire; the fire began to burn the stick; the stick began to beat the dog; the dog began to bite the pig; the little pig in a fright jumped over the stile; and so the old woman got home that night.

RAGGYLUG

Once there was a little furry rabbit, who lived with his mother deep down in a nest under the long grass. His name was Raggylug, and his mother's name was Molly Cottontail. Every morning, when Molly Cottontail went out to hunt for food, she said to Raggylug, "Now Raggylug, lie still, and make no noise. No matter what you hear, no matter what you see, don't you move. Remember you are only a baby rabbit, and lie low." And Raggylug always said he would.

One day, after his mother had gone, he was lying very still in the nest, looking up through the feathery grass. By just cocking his eye, so, he could see what was going on up in the world. Once a big blue-jay perched on a twig above him, and scolded some one very loudly; he kept saying, "Thief! thief!" But Raggylug never moved his nose, nor his paws; he

lay still. Once a lady-bug took a walk down a blade of grass, over his head; she was so top-heavy that pretty soon she tumbled off and fell to the bottom, and had to begin all over again. But Raggylug never moved his nose nor his paws; he lay still.

The sun was warm, and it was very still.

Suddenly Raggylug heard a little sound, far off. It sounded like "Swish, swish," very soft and far away. He listened. It was a queer little sound, low down in the grass, "rustle — rustle — rustle;" Raggylug was interested. But he never moved his nose or his paws; he lay still. Then the sound came nearer, "rustle — rustle — rustle;" then grew fainter, then came nearer; in and out, nearer and nearer, like something coming; only, when Raggylug heard anything coming he always heard its feet, stepping ever so softly. What could it be that came so smoothly, — rustle — rustle — without any feet?

He forgot his mother's warning, and sat up on his hind paws; the sound stopped then. "Pooh,"

thought Raggylug, "I'm not a baby rabbit, I am three weeks old; I'll find out what this is." He stuck his head over the top of the nest, and looked — straight into the wicked eyes of a great big snake. "Mammy, Mammy!" screamed Raggylug, "Oh, Mammy, Mam—" But he could n't scream any more, for the big snake had his ear in his mouth and was winding about the soft little body, squeezing Raggylug's life out. He tried to call "Mammy!" again, but he could not breathe.

Ah, but Mammy had heard the first cry. Straight over the fields she flew, leaping the stones and hummocks, fast as the wind, to save her baby. She was n't a timid little cottontail rabbit then; she was a mother whose child was in danger. And when she came to Raggylug and the big snake, she took one look, and then hop! hop! she went over the snake's back; and as she jumped she struck at the snake with her strong hind claws so that they tore his skin. He hissed with rage, but he did not let go.

"HOP! HOP! SHE WENT OVER THE SNAKE'S BACK"

Hop! hop! she went again, and this time she hurt him so that he twisted and turned; but he held on to Raggylug.

Once more the mother rabbit hopped, and once more she struck and tore the snake's back with her sharp claws. Zzz! How she hurt! The snake dropped Raggy to strike at her, and Raggy rolled on to his feet and ran.

"Run, Raggylug, run!" said his mother, keeping the snake busy with her jumps; and you may believe Raggylug ran! Just as soon as he was out of the way his mother came too, and showed him where to go. When she ran, there was a little white patch that showed under her tail; that was for Raggy to follow, — he followed it now.

Far, far away she led him, through the long grass, to a place where the big snake could not find him, and there she made a new nest. And this time, when she told Raggylug to lie low you 'd better believe he minded!

THE GOLDEN COBWEBS

A STORY TO TELL BY THE CHRISTMAS TREE

I am going to tell you a story about something wonderful that happened to a Christmas tree like this, ever and ever so long ago, when it was once upon a time.

It was before Christmas, and the tree was all trimmed with pop-corn and silver nuts and [name the trimmings of the tree before you], and stood safely out of sight in a room where the doors were locked, so that the children should not see it before it was time. But ever so many other little house-people had seen it. The big black pussy saw it with her great green eyes; the little gray kitty saw it with her little blue eyes; the kind house-dog saw it with his steady brown eyes; the yellow canary saw it with his wise, bright eyes. Even the wee, wee mice that were so

afraid of the cat had peeped one peek when no one was by.

But there was some one who had n't seen the Christmas Tree. It was the little gray spider!

You see, the spiders lived in the corners, — the warm corners of the sunny attic and the dark corners of the nice cellar. And they were expecting to see the Christmas Tree as much as anybody. But just before Christmas a great cleaning-up began in the house. The house-mother came sweeping and dusting and wiping and scrubbing, to make everything grand and clean for the Christ-child's birthday. Her broom went into all the corners, poke, poke, — and of course the spiders had to run. Dear, dear, *how* the spiders had to run! Not one could stay in the house while the Christmas cleanness lasted. So, you see, they could n't see the Christmas Tree.

Spiders like to know all about everything, and see all there is to see, and they were very sad. So at last they went to the Christ-child and told him all about it.

"All the others see the Christmas Tree, dear Christ-child," they said; "but we, who are so domestic and so fond of beautiful things, we are *cleaned up!* We cannot see it, at all."

The Christ-child was sorry for the little spiders when he heard this, and he said they should see the Christmas Tree.

The day before Christmas, when nobody was noticing, he let them all go in, to look as long as ever they liked.

They came creepy, creepy, down the attic stairs, creepy, creepy, up the cellar stairs, creepy, creepy, along the halls, — and into the beautiful room. The fat mother spiders and the old papa spiders were there, and all the little teenty, tonty, curly spiders, the baby ones. And then they looked! Round and round the tree they crawled, and looked and looked and looked. Oh, what a good time they had! They thought it was perfectly beautiful. And when they had looked at everything they could see from the floor,

they started up the tree to see more. All over the tree they ran, creepy, crawly, looking at every single thing. Up and down, in and out, over every branch and twig, the little spiders ran, and saw every one of the pretty things right up close.

They stayed till they had seen all there was to see, you may be sure, and then they went away at last, *quite* happy.

Then, in the still, dark night before Christmas Day, the dear Christ-child came, to bless the tree for the children. But when he looked at it — *what* do you suppose? — it was covered with cobwebs! Everywhere the little spiders had been they had left a spider-web; and you know they had been just everywhere. So the tree was covered from its trunk to its tip with spider-webs, all hanging from the branches and looped around the twigs; it was a strange sight.

What could the Christ-child do? He knew that house-mothers do not like cobwebs; it would never,

never do to have a Christmas Tree covered with those. No, indeed.

So the dear Christ-child touched the spiders' webs, and turned them all to gold! Was n't that a lovely trimming? They shone and shone, all over the beautiful tree. And that is the way the Christmas Tree came to have golden cobwebs on it.

THE STORY OF LITTLE TAVWOTS

This is the story an Indian woman told a little white boy who lived with his father and mother near the Indians' country; and Tavwots is the name of the little rabbit.

But once, long ago, Tavwots was not little, — he was the largest of all four-footed things, and a mighty hunter. He used to hunt every day; as soon as it was day, and light enough to see, he used to get up, and go to his hunting. But every day he saw the track of a great foot on the trail, before him. This troubled him, for his pride was as big as his body.

"Who is this," he cried, "that goes before me to the hunting, and makes so great a stride? Does he think to put me to shame?"

"T'-sst!" said his mother, "there is none greater than thou."

"Still, there are the footsteps in the trail," said Tavwots.

And the next morning he got up earlier; but still the great footprints and the mighty stride were before him. The next morning he got up still earlier; but there were the mighty foot-tracks and the long, long stride.

"Now I will set me a trap for this impudent fellow," said Tavwots, for he was very cunning. So he made a snare of his bow-string and set it in the trail overnight.

And when in the morning he went to look, behold, he had caught the sun in his snare! All that part of the earth was beginning to smoke with the heat of it.

"Is it you who made the tracks in my trail?" cried Tavwots.

"It is I," said the sun; "come and set me free, before the whole earth is afire."

Then Tavwots saw what he had to do, and he drew his sharp hunting-knife and ran to cut the bow-string.

"TAVWOTS . . . DREW HIS SHARP HUNTING-KNIFE AND RAN TO CUT THE BOW-STRING"

But the heat was so great that he ran back before he had done it; and when he ran back he was melted down to half his size! Then the earth began to burn, and the smoke curled up against the sky.

"Come again, Tavwots," cried the sun.

And Tavwots ran again to cut the bow-string. But the heat was so great that he ran back before he had done it, and he was melted down to a quarter of his size!

"Come again, Tavwots, and quickly," cried the sun, "or all the world will be burnt up."

And Tavwots ran again; this time he cut the bow-string and set the sun free. But when he got back he was melted down to the size he is now! Only one thing is left of all his greatness: you may still see by the print of his feet as he leaps in the trail, how great his stride was when he caught the sun in his snare.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN TOWN

Once I was way over across the ocean, in a country called Germany; and I went to a funny little town, where all the streets ran uphill. At the top there was a big mountain, steep like the roof of a house, and at the bottom there was a big river, broad and slow. And the funniest thing about the little town was that all the stores had the same thing in them; bakers' shops, grocers' shops, everywhere we went we saw the same thing, — big chocolate rats, rats and mice, made out of chocolate candy. We were surprised about it after a while. "Why do you have rats in your stores?" we asked them.

"Don't you know this is Hamelin town?" they said. "What of that?" said we. "Why, Hamelin town is where the Pied Piper came," they told us; "surely you know about the Pied Piper?" "*What* about the Pied Piper?" we said. And this is what they told us about him.

It seems that once, long, long ago, that little town was dreadfully troubled with rats. The houses were full of them, the stores were full of them, the churches were full of them, they were *everywhere*. The people were just about eaten out of house and home. Those rats,

They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats!

At last it got so bad that the people simply could n't stand it any longer. So they all came together and went to the town hall, and they said to the Mayor (you know what a mayor is?), "See here, what do we pay you your salary for? What are you good for, if you can't do a little thing like getting rid of these

rats? You just go to work and clear the town of them; find the remedy that's lacking, or — we'll send you packing!"

Well the poor Mayor was in a terrible way. What to do he did n't know. He sat there with his head in his hands, and thought and thought and thought.

Suddenly there came a little *rat-rat* at the door. Oh! how the Mayor jumped! His poor old heart went pit-a-pat at anything like the sound of a rat. But it was only the scraping of shoes on the mat. So the Mayor sat up, and said, "Come in!"

And in came the strangest figure! It was a man, very tall and very thin, with a sharp chin and a mouth where the smiles went out and in, and two blue eyes, each like a pin; and he was dressed half in red and half in yellow, — he really was the strangest fellow! — and round his neck he had a long red and yellow ribbon, and on it was hung a thing something like a flute, and his fingers went straying up and down it as if he wanted to be playing.

He came up to the Mayor and said, "I hear you are troubled with rats in this town."

"I should say we were," groaned the Mayor.

"Would you like to get rid of them? I can do it for you."

"You can?" cried the Mayor. "How? Who are you, any way?"

"Men call me the Pied Piper," said the man, "and I know a way to draw after me everything that walks, or flies, or swims. What will you give me if I rid your town of rats?"

"Anything, anything," said the Mayor. "I don't believe you can do it, but if you can, — I'll give you five thousand dollars."

"All right," said the Piper, "it is a bargain."

And then he went to the door and stepped out into the street and stood, and put the long flute-like thing to his lips, and began to play a little tune. A strange, high, little tune. And before

three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling!
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives —
Followed the Piper for their lives!

From street to street he piped, advancing, from street to street they followed, dancing. Up one street and down another, till they came right down to the edge of the big river, and there the Piper turned sharply about and stepped aside, and all those rats tumbled hurry scurry, head over heels, down the bank into the river *and — were — drowned.* Every single last one. Except one big old fat rat; he was so fat he did n't sink, and he swam across, and ran away down south to live.

Then the Piper came back to the town hall. And all the people were waving their hats and shouting for joy. The Mayor said they would have a big celebration, and build a tremendous bonfire in the middle of the town. He asked the Piper to stay and see the bonfire, — very politely.

"Yes," said the Piper, "that will be very nice; but first, if you please, I should like my five thousand dollars."

"H'm, — er — ahem!" said the Mayor, "You mean that little joke of mine; of course that was a joke" — (You see it is always harder to pay for a thing after it is all used up.)

"I do not joke," said the Piper very quietly; "my five thousand dollars, if you please."

"Oh, come, now," said the Mayor, "you know very well it was n't worth five cents to play a little tune like that; call it five dollars, and let it go at that."

"A bargain is a bargain," said the Piper; "for the last time, — will you give me my five thousand dollars?"

"I'll give you a pipe of tobacco, something good to eat, and call you lucky at that!" said the Mayor, tossing his head.

Then the Piper's mouth grew strange and thin, and sharp blue and green lights began dancing in his eyes, and he said to the Mayor very softly, "I know another tune than that I played; I play it to those who play me false."

"Play what you please! You can't frighten me! Do your worst!" said the Mayor, making himself big.

Then the Piper stood high up on the steps of the town hall, and put the pipe to his lips, and began to play a little tune. It was quite a different little tune, this time, very soft and sweet, and very, very strange. And before he had played three notes, you heard

> a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
> Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;
> Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
> Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
> And like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scattering,
> Out came the children running.

"WITH THE CHILDREN AT HIS HEELS"

All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

"Stop, stop!" cried the people, "He is taking our children! Stop him, Mayor!"

"I will give you your money, I will!" cried the Mayor, and tried to run after the Piper.

But the very same music that made the children dance made the grown-up people stand stock-still; it was is if their feet had been tied to the ground; they could not move a muscle. There they stood and saw the Piper move slowly down the street, playing his little tune, with the children at his heels. On and on he went; on and on the children danced; till he came to the bank of the river.

"Oh, oh! He will drown our children in the river!" cried the people. But the Piper turned and went along by the bank, and all the children followed after.

Up, and up, and up the hill they went, straight toward the mountain which is like the roof of a house. And just as they got to it, the mountain *opened*, — like two great doors, and the Piper went in through the opening, playing the little tune, and the children danced after him — and — just as they got through — the great doors slid together again and shut them all in! Every single last one. Except one little lame child, who could n't keep up with the rest and did n't get there in time. And they never came back any more at all, never.

But years and years afterwards, when the fat old rat who swam across the river was a grandfather, his children used to ask him, "What made you follow the music, Grandfather?" and he used to tell them, "My dears, when I heard that tune I thought I heard the moving aside of pickle-tub boards, and the leaving ajar of preserve cupboards, and I smelled the most delicious old cheese in the world, and I saw sugar barrels ahead of me; and then, just as a great yellow cheese

seemed to be saying, 'Come, bore me' — I felt the river rolling o'er me!"

And in the same way the people asked the little lame child, "What made you follow the music?" "I do not know what the others heard," he said, "but I, when the Piper began to play, I heard a voice that told of a wonderful country just ahead, where the bees had no stings and the horses had wings, and the trees bore wonderful fruits, where no one was tired or lame, and children played all day; and just as the beautiful country was one step away — the mountain closed on my playmates, and I was left alone."

That was all the people ever knew. The children never came back. All that was left of the Piper and the rats was just the big street that led to the river; so they called it the Street of the Pied Piper.

And that is the end of the story.

THE CAT AND THE PARROT

Once there was a cat, and a parrot. And they had agreed to ask each other to dinner, turn and turn about: first the cat should ask the parrot, then the parrot should invite the cat, and so on. It was the cat's turn first.

Now the cat was very mean. He provided nothing at all for dinner except a pint of milk, a little slice of fish, and a biscuit. The parrot was too polite to complain, but he did not have a very good time.

When it was his turn to invite the cat, he cooked a fine dinner. He had a roast of meat, a pot of tea, a basket of fruit, and, best of all, he baked a whole clothes-basketful of little cakes! — little, brown, crispy, spicy cakes! Oh, I should say as many as five hundred. And he put four hundred and ninety-eight of the cakes before the cat, keeping only two for himself.

Well, the cat ate the roast, and drank the tea, and

sucked the fruit, and then he began on the pile of cakes. He ate all the four hundred and ninety-eight cakes, and then he looked round and said: —

"I'm hungry; have n't you anything to eat?"

"Why," said the parrot, "here are my two cakes, if y u want them?"

The cat ate up the two cakes, and then he licked his chops and said, "I am beginning to get an appetite; have you anything to eat?"

"Well, really," said the parrot, who was now rather angry, "I don't see anything more, unless you wish to eat me!" He thought the cat would be ashamed when he heard that — but the cat just looked at him and licked his chops again, — and slip! slop! gobble! down his throat went the parrot!

Then the cat started down the street. An old woman was standing by, and she had seen the whole thing, and she was shocked that the cat should eat his friend. "Why, cat!" she said, "how dreadful of you to eat your friend the parrot!"

"Parrot, indeed!" said the cat. "What's a parrot to me? — I've a great mind to eat you, too." And — before you could say "Jack Robinson" — slip! slop! gobble! down went the old woman!

Then the cat started down the road again, walking like this, because he felt so fine. Pretty soon he met a man driving a donkey. The man was beating the donkey, to hurry him up, and when he saw the cat he said, "Get out of my way, cat; I'm in a hurry and my donkey might tread on you."

"Donkey, indeed!" said the cat, "much I care for a donkey! I have eaten five hundred cakes, I've eaten my friend the parrot, I've eaten an old woman, — what's to hinder my eating a miserable man and a donkey?"

And slip! slop! gobble! down went the old man and the donkey.

Then the cat walked on down the road, jauntily, like this. After a little, he met a procession, coming that way. The king was at the head, walking proudly

"'GET OUT OF MY WAY, PUSSY'"

with his newly married bride, and behind him were his soldiers, marching, and behind them were ever and ever so many elephants, walking two by two. The king felt very kind to everybody, because he had just been married, and he said to the cat, "Get out of my way, pussy, get out of my way, — my elephants might hurt you."

"Hurt me!" said the cat, shaking his fat sides. "Ho, ho! I've eaten five hundred cakes, I've eaten my friend the parrot, I've eaten an old woman, I've eaten a man and a donkey; what's to hinder my eating a beggarly king?"

And slip! slop! gobble! down went the king; down went the queen; down went the soldiers, — and down went all the elephants!

Then the cat went on, more slowly; he had really had enough to eat, now. But a little farther on he met two land-crabs, scuttling along in the dust. "Get out of our way, pussy," they squeaked.

"Ho, ho, ho!" cried the cat in a terrible voice.

"I've eaten five hundred cakes, I've eaten my friend the parrot, I 've eaten an old woman, a man with a donkey, a king, a queen, his men-at-arms, and all his elephants; and now I 'll eat you too."

And slip! slop! gobble! down went the two land-crabs.

When the land-crabs got down inside, they began to look around. It was very dark, but they could see the poor king sitting in a corner with his bride on his arm; she had fainted. Near them were the men-at-arms, treading on one another's toes, and the elephants still trying to form in twos, — but they could n't because there was not room. In the opposite corner sat the old woman, and near her stood the man and his donkey. But in the other corner was a great pile of cakes, and by them perched the parrot, his feathers all drooping.

"Let 's get to work!" said the land-crabs. And snip, snap, they began to make a little hole in the side, with their sharp claws. Snip, snap, snip, snap, —

till it was big enough to get through. Then out they scuttled.

Then out walked the king, carrying his bride; out marched the men-at-arms; out tramped the elephants, two by two; out came the old man, beating his donkey; out walked the old woman, scolding the cat; and last of all, out hopped the parrot, holding a cake in each claw. (You remember, two cakes was all he wanted?)

But the poor cat had to spend the whole day sewing up the hole in his coat!

THE FIRE-BRINGER

This is the Indian story of how fire was brought to the tribes. It was long, long ago, when men and beasts talked together with understanding, and the gray Coyote was friend and counselor of man.

There was a Boy of the tribe who was swift of foot and keen of eye, and he and the Coyote ranged the wood together. They saw the men catching fish in the creeks with their hands, and the women digging roots with sharp stones. This was in summer. But when winter came on, they saw the people running naked in the snow, or huddled in caves of the rocks, and most miserable. The Boy noticed this, and was very unhappy for the misery of his people.

"I do not feel it," said the Coyote.

"You have a coat of good fur," said the Boy, "and my people have not."

"Come to the hunt," said the Coyote.

"I will hunt no more, till I have found a way to help my people against the cold," said the Boy. "Help me, O Counselor!"

Then the Coyote ran away, and came back after a long time; he said he had found a way, but it was a hard way.

"No way is too hard," said the Boy. So the Coyote told him that they must go to the Burning Mountain and bring fire to the people.

"What is fire?" said the Boy. And the Coyote told him that fire was red like a flower, yet not a flower; swift to run in the grass and to destroy, like a beast, yet no beast; fierce and hurtful, yet a good servant to keep one warm, if kept among stones and fed with small sticks.

"We will get this fire," said the Boy.

First the boy had to persuade the people to give him one hundred swift runners. Then he and they and the Coyote started at a good pace for the far-away Burning Mountain. At the end of the first day's

trail they left the weakest of the runners, to wait; at the end of the second, the next stronger; at the end of the third, the next; and so for each of the hundred days of the journey; and the Boy was the strongest runner, and went to the last trail with the Counselor. High mountains they crossed, and great plains, and giant woods, and at last they came to the Big Water, quaking along the sand at the foot of the Burning Mountain.

It stood up in a high peaked cone, and smoke rolled out from it endlessly along the sky. At night, the Fire Spirits danced, and the glare reddened the Big Water far out.

There the Counselor said to the Boy, "Stay thou here till I bring thee a brand from the burning; be ready and right for running, for I shall be far spent when I come again, and the Fire Spirits will pursue me."

Then he went up the mountain; and the Fire Spirits only laughed when they saw him, for he looked so

slinking, inconsiderable, and mean, that none of them thought harm from him. And in the night, when they were at their dance about the mountain, the Coyote stole the fire, and ran with it down the slope of the Burning Mountain. When the Fire Spirits saw what he had done they streamed out after him, red and angry, with a humming sound like a swarm of bees. But the Coyote was still ahead; the sparks of the brand streamed out along his flanks, as he carried it in his mouth; and he stretched his body to the trail.

The Boy saw him coming, like a falling star against the mountain; he heard the singing sound of the Fire Spirits close behind, and the laboring breath of the Counselor. And when the good beast panted down beside him, the Boy caught the brand from his jaws and was off, like an arrow from a bent bow. Out he shot on the homeward path, and the Fire Spirits snapped and sung behind him. But fast as they pursued he fled faster, till he saw the next runner standing in his place, his body bent for the running. To him he

passed it, and it was off and away, with the Fire Spirits raging in chase.

So it passed from hand to hand, and the Fire Spirits tore after it through the scrub, till they came to the mountains of the snows; these they could not pass. Then the dark, sleek runners with the backward streaming brand bore it forward, shining star-like in the night, glowing red in sultry noons, violet pale in twilight glooms, until they came in safety to their own land.

And there they kept it among the stones and fed it with small sticks, as the Counselor advised; and it kept the people warm.

Ever after the Boy was called the Fire-Bringer; and ever after the Coyote bore the sign of the bringing, for the fur along his flanks was singed and yellow from the flames that streamed backward from the brand.

"THE FIRE SPIRITS TORE AFTER IT . . . TILL THEY CAME TO THE MOUNTAINS OF THE SNOWS"

THE BURNING OF THE RICE FIELDS

Once there was a good old man who lived up on a mountain, far away in Japan. All round his little house the mountain was flat, and the ground was rich; and there were the rice fields of all the people who lived in the village at the mountain's foot. Mornings and evenings, the old man and his little grandson, who lived with him, used to look far down on the people at work in the village, and watch the blue sea which lay all round the land, so close that there was no room for fields below, only for houses. The little boy loved the rice fields, dearly, for he knew that all the good food for all the people came from them; and he often helped his grandfather watch over them.

One day, the grandfather was standing alone, before his house, looking far down at the people, and out at the sea, when, suddenly, he saw something very strange far off where the sea and sky meet. Some-

thing like a great cloud was rising there, as if the sea were lifting itself high into the sky. The old man put his hands to his eyes and looked again, hard as his old sight could. Then he turned and ran to the house. "Yone, Yone!" he cried, "bring a brand from the hearth!"

The little grandson could not imagine what his grandfather wanted of fire, but he always obeyed, so he ran quickly and brought the brand. The old man already had one, and was running for the rice fields. Yone ran after. But what was his horror to see his grandfather thrust his burning brand into the ripe dry rice, where it stood.

"Oh, Grandfather, Grandfather!" screamed the little boy, "what are you doing?"

"Quick, set fire! Thrust your brand in!" said the grandfather.

Yone thought his dear grandfather had lost his mind, and he began to sob; but a little Japanese boy always obeys, so though he sobbed, he thrust his torch

in, and the sharp flame ran up the dry stalks, red and yellow. In an instant, the field was ablaze, and thick black smoke began to pour up, on the mountain side. It rose like a cloud, black and fierce, and in no time the people below saw that their precious rice fields were on fire. Ah, how they ran! Men, women, and children climbed the mountain, running as fast as they could to save the rice; not one soul stayed behind.

And when they came to the mountain top, and saw the beautiful rice-crop all in flames, beyond help, they cried bitterly, "Who has done this thing? How did it happen?"

"I set fire," said the old man, very solemnly; and the little grandson sobbed, "Grandfather set fire."

But when they came fiercely round the old man, with "Why? Why?" he only turned and pointed to the sea. "Look!" he said.

They all turned and looked. And there, where the blue sea had lain, so calm, a mighty wall of water, reaching from earth to sky, was rolling in. No one

could scream, so terrible was the sight. The wall of water rolled in on the land, passed quite over the place where the village had been, and broke, with an awful sound, on the mountain-side. One wave more, and still one more, came; and then all was water, as far as they could look, below; the village where they had been was under the sea.

But the people were all safe. And when they saw what the old man had done, they honored him above all men for the quick wit which had saved them all from the tidal wave.

THE STORY OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Once, while Jesus was journeying about, he passed near a town where a man named Jairus lived. This man was a ruler in the synagogue, and he had just one little daughter, about twelve years of age. At the time that Jesus was there the little daughter was very sick, and at last she lay a-dying.

Her father heard that there was a wonderful man near the town, who was healing sick people whom no one else could help, and in his despair he ran out into the streets to search for him. He found Jesus walking in the midst of a crowd of people, and when he saw him he fell down at Jesus' feet and besought him to come into his house, to heal his daughter. And Jesus said, yes, he would go with him. But there were so many people begging to be healed, and so many looking to see what happened, that the crowd thronged

them, and kept them from moving fast. And before they reached the house one of the man's servants came to meet them, and said, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the master to come farther."

But instantly Jesus turned to the father and said, "Fear not; only believe, and she shall be made whole." And he went on with Jairus, to the house.

When they came to the house, they heard the sound of weeping and lamentation; the household was mourning for the little daughter, who was dead. Jesus sent all the strangers away from the door, and only three of his disciples and the father and mother of the child went in with him. And when he was within, he said to the mourning people, "Weep not; she is not dead; she sleepeth."

When he had passed, they laughed him to scorn, for they knew that she was dead.

Then Jesus left them all, and went alone into the chamber where the little daughter lay. And when he was there, alone, he went up to the bed where she was,

and bent over her, and took her by the hand. And he said, "Maiden, arise."

And her spirit came unto her again! And she lived and grew up in her father's house.

TARPEIA

There was once a girl named Tarpeia, whose father was guard of the outer gate of the citadel of Rome. It was a time of war, — the Sabines were besieging the city. Their camp was close outside the city wall.

Tarpeia used to see the Sabine soldiers when she went to draw water from the public well, for that was outside the gate. And sometimes she stayed about and let the strange men talk with her, because she liked to look at their bright silver ornaments. The Sabine soldiers wore heavy rings and bracelets on their left arms, — some wore as many as four or five.

The soldiers knew she was the daughter of the keeper of the citadel, and they saw that she had greedy eyes for their ornaments. So day by day they talked with her, and showed her their silver rings, and tempted her. And at last Tarpeia made a bargain, to betray her city to them. She said she would unlock

the great gate and let them in, *if they would give her what they wore on their left arms.*

The night came. When it was perfectly dark and still, Tarpeia stole from her bed, took the great key from its place, and silently unlocked the gate which protected the city. Outside, in the dark, stood the soldiers of the enemy, waiting. As she opened the gate, the long shadowy files pressed forward silently, and the Sabines entered the citadel.

As the first man came inside, Tarpeia stretched forth her hand for her price. The soldier lifted high his left arm. "Take thy reward!" he said, and as he spoke he hurled upon her that which he wore upon it. Down upon her head crashed — not the silver rings of the soldier, but the great brass shield he carried in battle!

She sank beneath it, to the ground.

"Take thy reward," said the next; and his shield rang against the first.

"Thy reward," said the next — and the next — and

the next — and the next; every man wore his shield on his left arm.

So Tarpeia lay buried beneath the reward she had claimed, and the Sabines marched past her dead body, into the city she had betrayed.

THE JUDGMENT OF MIDAS

The Greek god Pan, the god of all out-of-doors, was a great musician. He played on a pipe of reeds. And the sound of his reed-pipe was so sweet that he grew proud, and believed himself greater than the chief musician of the gods, Apollo, the sun-god. So he challenged great Apollo to make better music than he.

Apollo consented to the test, to punish Pan's vanity, and they chose the mountain Tmolus for judge, since no one is so old and wise as the hills.

When Pan and Apollo came before Tmolus, to play, their followers came with them, to hear. One of the followers of Pan was a mortal named Midas.

First Pan played; he blew on his reed-pipe, and out came a tune so wild and yet so coaxing that the birds hopped from the trees to get near; the squirrels came running from their holes; and the very trees swayed as if they wanted to dance. The fauns laughed aloud for

joy as the melody tickled their furry little ears. And Midas thought it the sweetest music in the world.

Then Apollo rose. His hair shook drops of light from its curls; his robes were like the edge of the sunset cloud; in his hands he held a golden lyre. And when he touched the strings of the lyre, such music stole upon the air as never god nor mortal heard before. The wild creatures of the wood crouched still as stone; the trees held every leaf from rustling; earth and air were silent as a dream. To hear such music cease was like bidding farewell to father and mother.

When the charm was broken, all his hearers fell at Apollo's feet and proclaimed the victory his. But Midas would not. He alone would not admit that the music was better than Pan's.

"If thine ears are so dull, mortal," said Apollo, "they shall take the shape that suits them." And he touched the ears of Midas. And straightway the dull ears grew long, pointed, and furry, and they turned this way and that. They were the ears of an ass!

For a long time Midas managed to hide the tell-tale ears from every one; but at last a servant discovered the secret. He knew he must not tell, yet he could not bear not to; so one day he went into the meadow, scooped a little hollow in the turf, and whispered the secret into the earth. Then he covered it up again, and went away. But, alas, a bed of reeds sprang up from the spot and whispered the secret to the grass. The grass told it to the tree-tops, the tree-tops to the little birds, and they cried it all abroad.

And to this day, when the wind sets the reeds nodding together, they whisper, laughing, "Midas has the ears of an ass! Oh, hush, hush!"

BILLY BEG AND HIS BULL

Once upon a time, there was a king and a queen, and they had one son, whose name was Billy. And Billy had a bull he was very fond of, and the bull was just as fond of him. And when the queen came to die, she put it as her last request on the king, that come what might, come what may, he 'd not part Billy and the bull. And the king promised that, come what might, come what may, he would not. Then the good queen died, and was buried.

After a time, the king married again, and the new queen could not abide Billy; no more could she stand the bull, seeing him and Billy so thick. So she asked the king to have the bull killed. But the king said he had promised, come what might, come what may, he'd not part Billy Beg and his bull, so he could not.

Then the queen sent for the Hen-Wife, and asked

what she should do. "What will you give me," said the Hen-Wife, "and I'll very soon part them?"

"Anything at all," said the queen.

"Then do you take to your bed, very sick with a complaint," said the Hen-Wife, "and I'll do the rest."

So the queen took to her bed, very sick with a complaint, and the king came to see what could be done for her. "I shall never be better of this," she said, "till I have the medicine the Hen-Wife ordered."

"What is that?" said the king.

"A mouthful of the blood of Billy Beg's bull."

"I can't give you that," said the king, and went away, sorrowful.

Then the queen got sicker and sicker, and each time the king asked what would cure her she said, "A mouthful of the blood of Billy Beg's bull." And at last it looked as if she were going to die. So the king finally set a day for the bull to be killed. At that the queen was so happy that she laid plans to get up and

see the grand sight. All the people were to be at the killing, and it was to be a great affair.

When Billy Beg heard all this, he was very sorrowful, and the bull noticed his looks. "What are you doitherin' about?" said the bull to him. So Billy told him. "Don't fret yourself about me," said the bull, "it's not I that'll be killed!"

The day came, when Billy Beg's bull was to be killed; all the people were there, and the queen, and Billy. And the bull was led out, to be seen. When he was led past Billy he bent his head. "Jump on my back, Billy, my boy," says he, "till I see what kind of a horseman you are!" Billy jumped on his back, and with that the bull leaped nine miles high and nine miles broad and came down with Billy sticking between his horns. Then away he rushed, over the head of the queen, killing her dead, where you would n't know day by night or night by day, over high hills, low hills, sleep walks and bullock traces, the Cove o' Cork, and old Tom Fox with his bugle horn.

When at last he stopped he said, "Now, Billy, my boy, you and I must undergo great scenery; there's a mighty great bull of the forest I must fight, here, and he'll be hard to fight, but I'll be able for him. But first we must have dinner. Put your hand in my left ear and pull out the napkin you'll find there, and when you've spread it, it will be covered with eating and drinking fit for a king."

So Billy put his hand in the bull's left ear, and drew out the napkin, and spread it; and, sure enough, it was spread with all kinds of eating and drinking, fit for a king. And Billy Beg ate well.

But just as he finished he heard a great roar, and out of the forest came a mighty bull, snorting and running.

And the two bulls at it and fought. They knocked the hard ground into soft, the soft into hard, the rocks into spring wells, and the spring wells into rocks. It was a terrible fight. But in the end, Billy Beg's bull was too able for the other bull, and he killed him, and drank his blood.

Then Billy jumped on the bull's back, and the bull off and away, where you would n't know day from night or night from day, over high hills, low hills, sheep walks and bullock traces, the Cove o' Cork, and old Tom Fox with his bugle horn. And when he stopped he told Billy to put his hand in his left ear and pull out the napkin, because he'd to fight another great bull of the forest. So Billy pulled out the napkin and spread it, and it was covered with all kinds of eating and drinking, fit for a king.

And, sure enough, just as Billy finished eating, there was a frightful roar, and a mighty great bull, greater than the first, rushed out of the forest. And the two bulls at it and fought. It was a terrible fight! They knocked the hard ground into soft, the soft into hard, the rocks into spring wells, and the spring wells into rocks. But in the end, Billy Beg's bull killed the other bull, and drank his blood.

Then he off and away, with Billy.

But when he came down, he told Billy Beg that he

was to fight another bull, the brother of the other two, and that this time the other bull would be too able for him, and would kill him and drink his blood.

"When I am dead, Billy, my boy," he said, "put your hand in my left ear and draw out the napkin, and you'll never want for eating nor drinking; and put your hand in my right ear, and you'll find a stick there, that will turn into a sword if you wave it three times round your head, and give you the strength of a thousand men besides your own. Keep that; then cut a strip of my hide, for a belt, for when you buckle it on, there's nothing can kill you."

Billy Beg was very sad to hear this. And very soon he heard a more dreadful roar than before, and a tremendous bull rushed out of the forest. Then came the worst fight of all. In the end, the other bull was too able for Billy Beg's bull, and he killed him and drank his blood.

Billy Beg sat down and cried for three days and three nights. After that he was hungry; so he put his

hand in the bull's left ear, and drew out the napkin, and ate all kinds of eating and drinking. Then he put his hand in the right ear and pulled out the stick which was to turn into a sword, if waved round his head three times, and to give him the strength of a thousand men, besides his own. And he cut a strip of the hide for a belt, and started off on his adventures.

Pretty soon he came to a fine place; an old gentleman lived there. So Billy went up and knocked, and the old gentleman came to the door.

"Are you wanting a boy?" says Billy.

"I am wanting a herd-boy," says the gentleman, "to take my six cows, six horses, six donkeys, and six goats to pasture every morning, and bring them back at night. Maybe you'll do."

"What is the wage?" says Billy.

"Oh, well," says the gentleman, "it 's no use to talk of that now; there's three giants live in the wood by the pasture, and every day they drink up all the milk and kill the boy that looks after the cattle; so we 'll

wait to talk about wage till we see if you come back alive."

"All right," says Billy, and he entered service with the old gentleman.

The first day, he drove the six cows, six horses, six donkeys, and six goats to pasture, and sat down by them. About noon he heard a kind of roaring from the wood; and out rushed a giant with two heads, spitting fire out of his two mouths.

"Oh! my fine fellow," says he to Billy, "you are too big for one swallow and not big enough for two; how would you like to die, then? By a cut with the sword, a blow with the fist, or a swing by the back?"

"That is as may be," says Billy, "but I'll fight you." And he buckled on his hide belt, and swung his stick three times round his head, to give him the strength of a thousand men besides his own, and went for the giant. And at the first clinch Billy Beg lifted the giant up and sunk him in the ground, up to his armpits.

"Oh, mercy! mercy! Spare my life!" cried the giant.

"I think not," said Billy; and he cut off his heads.

That night, when the cows and the goats were driven home, they gave so much milk that all the dishes in the house were filled, and the milk ran over and made a little brook in the yard.

"This is very queer," said the old gentleman; "they never gave any milk before. Did you see nothing in the pasture?"

"Nothing worse than myself," said Billy. And next morning he drove the six cows, six horses, six donkeys, and six goats to pasture again.

Just before noon he heard a terrific roar; and out of the wood came a giant with six heads.

"You killed my brother," he roared, fire coming out of his six mouths, "and I'll very soon have your blood! Will you die by a cut of the sword, or a swing by the back?"

"'I'LL FIGHT YOU,' SAID BILLY"

"I'll fight you," said Billy. And buckling on his belt and swinging his stick three times round his head, he ran in and grappled the giant. At the first hold, he sunk the giant up to the shoulders in the ground.

"Mercy, mercy, kind gentleman!" cried the giant. "Spare my life!"

"I think not," said Billy, and cut off his heads.

That night the cattle gave so much milk that it ran out of the house and made a stream, and turned a mill wheel which had not been turned for seven years!

"It's certainly very queer," said the old gentleman; "did you see nothing in the pasture, Billy?"

"Nothing worse than myself," said Billy.

And the next morning the gentleman said, "Billy, do you know, I only heard one of the giants roaring in the night, and the night before only two? What can ail them, at all?"

"Oh, maybe they are sick or something," says

Billy; and with that he drove the six cows, six horses, six donkeys, and six goats to pasture.

At about ten o'clock there was a roar like a dozen bulls, and the brother of the two giants came out of the woods, with twelve heads on him and fire spouting from every one of them.

"I'll have you, my fine boy," cries he; "how will you die, then?"

"We'll see," says Billy, "come on!"

And swinging his stick round his head, he made for the giant, and drove him up to his twelve necks in the ground. All twelve of the heads began begging for mercy, but Billy soon cut them short. Then he drove the beasts home.

And that night the milk overflowed the mill stream and made a lake, nine miles long, nine miles broad, and nine miles deep; and there is salmon and whitefish there to this day.

"You are a fine boy," said the gentleman, "and I 'll give you wage."

So Billy was herd.

The next day, his master told him to look after the house while he went up to the king's town, to see a great sight. "What will it be?" said Billy. "The king's daughter is to be eaten by a fiery dragon," said his master, "unless the champion fighter they've been feeding for six weeks on purpose kills the dragon."

"Oh," said Billy.

After he was left alone, there were people passing on horses and afoot, in coaches and chaises, in carriages and in wheelbarrows, all going to see the great sight. And all asked Billy why he was not on his way. But Billy said he did n't care about going.

When the last passer-by was out of sight, Billy ran and dressed himself in his master's best suit of clothes, took the brown mare from the stable, and was off to the king's town.

When he came there, he saw a big round place with great high seats built up around it, and all the people sitting there. Down in the midst was the champion,

walking up and down proudly, with two men behind him to carry his heavy sword. And up in the centre of the seats was the princess, with her maidens; she was looking very pretty, but nervous-like.

The fight was about to begin when Billy got there, and the herald was crying out how the champion would fight the dragon for the princess' sake, when suddenly there was heard a fearsome great roaring, and the people shouted, "Here he is now, the dragon!"

The dragon had more heads than the biggest of the giants, and fire and smoke came from every one of them. And when the champion saw the creature, he never waited even to take his sword, — he turned and ran; and he never stopped till he came to a deep well, where he jumped in and hid himself, up to the neck.

When the princess saw that her champion was gone, she began wringing her hands, and crying, "Oh, please kind gentlemen, fight the dragon, some of you, and keep me from being eaten! Will no one fight the

dragon for me?" But no one stepped up, at all. And the dragon made to eat the princess.

Just then, out stepped Billy from the crowd, with his fine suit of clothes and his hide belt on him. "I'll fight the beast," he says, and swinging his stick three times round his head, to give him the strength of a thousand men besides his own, he walked up to the dragon easy. The princess and all the people were looking, you may be sure, and the dragon raged at Billy with all his mouths, and they at it and fought. It was a terrible fight, but in the end Billy Beg had the dragon down, and he cut off his heads with the sword.

There was great shouting, then, and crying that the strange champion must come to the king to be made prince, and to the princess, to be seen. But in the midst of the hullabaloo Billy Beg slips on the brown mare and is off and away before any one has seen his face. But, quick as he was, he was not so quick but that the princess caught hold of him as he jumped on his horse, and he got away with one shoe

left in her hand. And home he rode, to his master's house, and had his old clothes on and the mare in the stable before his master came back.

When his master came back, he had a great tale for Billy, how the princess's champion had run from the dragon, and a strange knight had come out of the clouds and killed the dragon, and before any one could stop him had disappeared in the sky. "Was n't it wonderful?" said the old gentleman to Billy. "I should say so," said Billy to him.

Soon there was a proclamation made that the man who killed the dragon was to be found, and to be made son of the king and husband of the princess; for that, every one should come up to the king's town and try on the shoe which the princess had pulled off the strange champion, and that man it fitted should be known to be the man. On the day set, there was passing of coaches and chaises, of carriages and wheelbarrows, people on horseback and afoot, and Billy's master was the first to go.

While Billy was watching, at last came along a raggedy man.

"Will you change clothes with me, and I'll give you boot?" said Billy to him.

"Shame to you to mock a poor raggedy man!" said the raggedy man to Billy.

"It 's no mock," said Billy, and he changed clothes with the raggedy man, and gave him boot.

When Billy came to the king's town, in his dreadful old clothes, no one knew him for the champion at all, and none would let him come forward to try the shoe. But after all had tried, Billy spoke up that he wanted to try. They laughed at him, and pushed him back, with his rags. But the princess would have it that he should try. "I like his face," she said; "let him try, now."

So up stepped Billy, and put on the shoe, and it fitted him like his own skin.

Then Billy confessed that it was he that killed the dragon. And that he was a king's son. And they put

a velvet suit on him, and hung a gold chain round his neck, and every one said a finer looking boy they'd never seen.

So Billy married the princess, and was the prince of that place.

THE LITTLE HERO OF HAARLEM

A long way off, across the ocean, there is a little country where the ground is lower than the level of the sea, instead of higher, as it is here. Of course the water would run in and cover the land and houses, if something were not done to keep it out. But something is done. The people build great, thick walls all round the country, and the walls keep the sea out. You see how much depends on those walls, — the good crops, the houses, and even the safety of the people. Even the small children in that country know that an accident to one of the walls is a terrible thing. These walls are really great banks, as wide as roads, and they are called "dikes."

Once there was a little boy who lived in that country, whose name was Hans. One day, he took his little brother out along by the dike to play. They went a long way out of the town, and came to where there

were no houses, but ever so many flowers and green fields. By and by, Hans climbed up on the dike, and sat down; the little brother was playing about at the foot of the bank.

Suddenly the little brother called out, "Oh, what a funny little hole! It bubbles!"

"Hole? Where?" said Hans.

"Here in the bank," said the little brother; "water's in it."

"What!" said Hans, and he slid down as fast as he could to where his little brother was playing.

There was the tinest little hole in the bank. Just an air-hole. A drop of water bubbled slowly through.

"It is a hole in the dike!" cried Hans. "What shall we do?"

He looked all round; not a person or a house in sight. He looked at the hole; the little drops oozed steadily through; he knew that the water would soon break a great gap, because that tiny hole gave it a chance. The town was so far away — if they ran for help it

would be too late; what should he do? Once more he looked; the hole was larger, now, and the water was trickling.

Suddenly a thought came to Hans. He stuck his little forefinger right into the hole, where it fitted tight; and he said to his little brother, "Run, Dieting! Go to the town and tell the men there 's a hole in the dike. Tell them I will keep it stopped till they get here."

The little brother knew by Hans's face that something very serious was the matter, and he started for the town, as fast as his legs could run. Hans, kneeling with his finger in the hole, watched him grow smaller and smaller as he got farther away.

Pretty soon he was as small as a chicken; then he was only a speck; then he was out of sight. Hans was all alone, squatted on the ground, with his finger tight in the bank.

He could hear the water, slap, slap, slap, on the stones; and deep down under the slapping was a gurgling, rumbling sound. It seemed very near.

By and by, his hand began to feel numb. He rubbed it with the other hand; but it got colder and more numb, colder and more numb, every minute. He looked to see if the men were coming; the road was bare as far as he could see. Then the cold began creeping, creeping, up his arm; first his wrist, then his arm to the elbow, then his arm to his shoulder; how cold it was! And soon it began to ache. Ugly little cramp-pains streamed up his finger, up his palm, up his arm, till it ached way into his shoulder, and down the back of his neck. It seemed hours since the little brother went away. He felt very lonely, and the hurt in his arm grew and grew. He watched the road with all his eyes, but no one came in sight. Then he leaned his head against the dike to rest his shoulder.

As his ear touched the dike, he heard the voice of the great sea, murmuring. The sound seemed to say,—

"I am the great sea. No one can stand against me. What are you, a little child, that you try to keep me out? Beware! Beware!"

Hans's heart beat in heavy knocks. Would they never come? He was frightened.

And the water went on beating at the wall, and murmuring, "I will come through, I will come through, I will get you, I will get you, run — run — before I come through!"

Hans started to pull out his finger; he was so frightened that he felt as if he must run forever. But that minute he remembered how much depended on him; if he pulled out his finger, the water would surely make the hole bigger, and at last break down the dike, and the sea would come in on all the land and houses. He set his teeth, and stuck his finger tighter than ever.

"You shall *not* come through!" he whispered, "I will *not* run!"

Just as he thought it, he heard a far-off shout. Far in the distance he saw a black something on the road, and dust. The men were coming! At last, they were coming. They came nearer, fast, and he could make out his own father and the neighbors. They had pick-

axes and shovels, and they were running. And as they ran they shouted, "We 're coming; take heart, we 're coming!"

The next minute, it seemed, they were there. And when they saw Hans, with his pale face, and his hand tight in the dike, they gave a great cheer, — just as people do for soldiers back from war; and they lifted him up and rubbed his aching arm with tender hands, and they told him that he was a real hero, and that he had saved the town.

When the men had mended the dike, they marched home, like an army, and Hans was carried high on their shoulders, because he was a hero. And to this day the people of Haarlem tell the story of how a little boy saved the dike.

THE LITTLE PINK ROSE

Once there was a little pink Rosebud, and she lived down in a little dark house under the ground. One day she was sitting there, all by herself, and it was very still. Suddenly, she heard a little *tap*, *tap*, *tap*, at the door.

"Who is that?" she said.

"It 's the Rain, and I want to come in," said a soft, sad, little voice.

"No, you can't come in," the little Rosebud said.

By and by she heard another little *tap*, *tap*, *tap*, on the window pane.

"Who is there?" she said.

The same soft little voice answered, "It 's the Rain, and I want to come in!"

"No, you can't come in," said the little Rosebud.

Then it was very still for a long time. At last, there

came a little rustling, whispering sound, all round the window: *rustle, whisper, whisper.*

"Who is there?" said the little Rosebud.

"It 's the Sunshine," said a little, soft, cheery voice, "and I want to come in!"

"N—no," said the little pink rose, "you can't come in." And she sat still again.

Pretty soon, she heard the sweet little rustling noise at the key-hole.

"Who is there?" she said.

"It 's the Sunshine," said the cheery little voice, "and I want to come in, I want to come in!"

"No, no," said the little pink rose, "you cannot come in."

By and by, as she sat so still, she heard *tap, tap, tap,* and *rustle, whisper, rustle,* all up and down the window pane, and on the door, and at the key-hole.

"*Who is there?*" she said.

"It's the Rain, and the Sun, the Rain and the Sun," said two little voices, together, "and we want

to come in! We want to come in! We want to come in!"

"Dear, dear," said the little Rosebud, "if there are two of you, I s'pose I shall have to let you in."

So she opened the door a little wee crack, and they came in. And one took one of her little hands, and the other took her other little hand, and they ran, ran, ran with her, right up to the top of the ground. Then they said, —

"Poke your head through!"

So she poked her head through; and she was in the midst of a beautiful garden. It was springtime, and all the other flowers had their heads poked through; and she was the prettiest little pink rose in the whole garden!

THE GINGERBREAD MAN

Once upon a time there was a little old woman and a little old man, and they lived all alone in a little old house. They had n't any little girls or any little boys, at all. So one day, the little old woman made a boy out of gingerbread; she made him a chocolate jacket, and put cinnamon seeds in it for buttons; his eyes were made of fine, fat currants; his mouth was made of rose-colored sugar; and he had a gay little cap of orange sugar-candy. When the little old woman had rolled him out, and dressed him up, and pinched his gingerbread shoes into shape, she put him in a pan; then she put the pan in the oven and shut the door; and she thought, "Now I shall have a little boy of my own."

When it was time for the Gingerbread Boy to be done she opened the oven door and pulled out the pan. Out jumped the little Gingerbread Boy on to the floor,

and away he ran, out of the door and down the street! The little old woman and the little old man ran after him as fast as they could, but he just laughed, and shouted, —

"Run! run! as fast as you can!

"You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!"

And they could n't catch him.

The little Gingerbread Boy ran on and on, until he came to a cow, by the roadside. "Stop, little Gingerbread Boy," said the cow; "I want to eat you." The little Gingerbread Boy laughed, and said, —

"I have run away from a little old woman,

"And a little old man,

"And I can run away from you, I can!"

And, as the cow chased him, he looked over his shoulder and cried, —

"Run! run! as fast as you can!

"You can't catch me, I 'm the Gingerbread Man!"

And the cow could n't catch him.

The little Gingerbread Boy ran on, and on, and on,

till he came to a horse, in the pasture. "Please stop, little Gingerbread Boy," said the horse, "you look very good to eat." But the little Gingerbread Boy laughed out loud. "Oho! oho!" he said, —

"I have run away from a little old woman,

"A little old man,

"A cow,

"And I can run away from you, I can!"

And, as the horse chased him, he looked over his shoulder and cried, —

"Run! run! as fast as you can!

"You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!"

And the horse could n't catch him.

By and by the little Gingerbread Boy came to a barn full of threshers. When the threshers smelled the Gingerbread Boy, they tried to pick him up, and said, "Don't run so fast, little Gingerbread Boy; you look very good to eat." But the little Gingerbread Boy ran harder than ever, and as he ran he cried out, —

"I have run away from a little old woman,

"A little old man,

"A cow,

"A horse,

"And I can run away from you, I can!"

And when he found that he was ahead of the threshers, he turned and shouted back to them, —

"Run! run! as fast as you can!

"You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!"

And the threshers could n't catch him.

Then the little Gingerbread Boy ran faster than ever. He ran and ran until he came to a field full of mowers. When the mowers saw how fine he looked, they ran after him, calling out, "Wait a bit! wait a bit, little Gingerbread Boy, we wish to eat you!" But the little Gingerbread Boy laughed harder than ever, and ran like the wind. "Oho! oho!" he said, —

"I have run away from a little old woman,

"A little old man,

"A cow,

"A horse,

"A barn full of threshers,

"And I can run away from you, I can!"

And when he found that he was ahead of the mowers, he turned and shouted back to them, —

"Run! run! as fast as you can!

"You can't catch me, I 'm the Gingerbread Man!"

And the mowers could n't catch him.

By this time the little Gingerbread Boy was so proud that he did n't think anybody could catch him. Pretty soon he saw a fox coming across a field. The fox looked at him and began to run. But the little Gingerbread Boy shouted across to him, "You can't catch me!" The fox began to run faster, and the little Gingerbread Boy ran faster, and as he ran, he chuckled, —

"I have run away from a little old woman,

"A little old man,

"A cow,

"A horse,

"A barn full of threshers,

"A field of mowers,

"And I can run away from you, I can!

"Run! run! as fast as you can!

"You can't catch me, I 'm the Gingerbread Man!"

"Why," said the fox, "I would not catch you if I could. I would not think of disturbing you."

Just then, the little Gingerbread Boy came to a river. He could not swim across, and he wanted to keep running away from the cow and the horse and the people.

"Jump on my tail, and I will take you across," said the fox.

So the little Gingerbread Boy jumped on the fox's tail, and the fox swam into the river. When he was a little way from shore he turned his head, and said, "You are too heavy on my tail, little Gingerbread Boy, I fear I shall let you get wet; jump on my back."

The little Gingerbread Boy jumped on his back.

A little farther out, the fox said, "I am afraid the water will cover you, there; jump on my shoulder."

The little Gingerbread Boy jumped on his shoulder.

In the middle of the stream the fox said, "Oh, dear! little Gingerbread Boy, my shoulder is sinking; jump on my nose, and I can hold you out of water."

So the little Gingerbread Boy jumped on his nose.

The minute the fox got on shore he threw back his head, and gave a snap!

"Dear me!" said the little Gingerbread Boy, "I am a quarter gone!" The next minute he said, "Why, I am half gone!" The next minute he said, "My goodness gracious, I am three quarters gone!"

And after that, the little Gingerbread Boy never said anything more at all.

THE LITTLE JACKALS AND THE LION

Once there was a great big jungle; and in the jungle there was a great big Lion; and the Lion was king of the jungle. Whenever he wanted anything to eat, all he had to do was to come up out of his cave in the stones and earth, and *roar*. When he had roared a few times all the little people of the jungle were so frightened that they came out of their holes and hiding-places and ran, this way and that, to get away. Then, of course, the Lion could see where they were. And he pounced on them, killed them, and gobbled them up.

He did this so often that at last there was not a single thing left alive in the jungle besides the Lion, except two little Jackals, — a little father Jackal and a little mother Jackal.

They had run away so many times that they were quite thin and very tired, and they could not run so fast any more. And one day the Lion was so near

that the little mother Jackal grew frightened; she said, —

"Oh, Father Jackal, Father Jackal! I b'lieve our time has come! the Lion will surely catch us this time!"

"Pooh, nonsense, mother!" said the little father Jackal. "Come, we 'll run on a bit!"

And they ran, ran, ran very fast, and the Lion did not catch them that time.

But at last a day came when the Lion was nearer still and the little mother Jackal was frightened about to death.

"Oh, Father Jackal, Father Jackal!" she cried; "I 'm sure our time has come! The Lion 's going to eat us this time!"

"Now, mother, don't you fret," said the little father Jackal; "you do just as I tell you, and it will be all right."

Then what did those cunning little Jackals do but take hold of hands and run up towards the Lion, as if

they had meant to come all the time. When he saw them coming he stood up, and roared in a terrible voice, —

"You miserable little wretches, come here and be eaten, at once! Why did n't you come before?"

The father Jackal bowed very low.

"Indeed, Father Lion," he said, "we meant to come before; we knew we ought to come before; and we wanted to come before; but every time we started to come, a dreadful great lion came out of the woods and roared at us, and frightened us so that we ran away."

"What do you mean?" roared the Lion. "There 's no other lion in this jungle, and you know it!"

"Indeed, indeed, Father Lion," said the little Jackal, "I know that is what everybody thinks; but indeed and indeed there is another lion! And he is as much bigger than you as you are bigger than I! His face is much more terrible, and his roar far, far more dreadful. Oh, he is far more fearful than you!"

At that the Lion stood up and roared so that the jungle shook.

"Take me to this lion," said he; "I 'll eat him up and then I'll eat you up."

The little Jackals danced on ahead, and the Lion stalked behind. They led him to a place where there was a round, deep well of clear water. They went round on one side of it, and the Lion stalked up to the other.

"He lives down there, Father Lion!" said the little Jackal. "He lives down there!"

The Lion came close and looked down into the water — and a lion's face looked back at him out of the water!

When he saw that, the Lion roared and shook his mane and showed his teeth. And the lion in the water shook his mane and showed his teeth. The Lion above shook his mane again and growled again, and made a terrible face. But the lion in the water made just as terrible a one, back. The Lion above could n't stand

"THE LION IN THE WATER SHOOK HIS MANE AND SHOWED HIS TEETH"

that. He leaped down into the well after the other lion.

But, of course, as you know very well, there was n't any other lion! It was only the reflection in the water.

So the poor old Lion floundered about and floundered about, and as he could n't get up the steep sides of the well, he was drowned dead. And when he was drowned the little Jackals took hold of hands and danced round the well, and sang, —

"The Lion is dead! The Lion is dead!

"We have killed the great Lion who would have killed us!

"The Lion is dead! The Lion is dead!

"Ao! Ao! Ao!"

LITTLE JACK ROLLAROUND

Once upon a time there was a wee little boy who slept in a tiny trundle-bed near his mother's great bed. The trundle-bed had castors on it so that it could be rolled about, and there was nothing in the world the little boy liked so much as to have it rolled. When his mother came to bed he would cry, "Roll me around! roll me around!" And his mother would put out her hand from the big bed and push the little bed back and forth till she was tired. The little boy could never get enough; so for this he was called "Little Jack Rollaround."

One night he had made his mother roll him about, till she fell asleep, and even then he kept crying, "Roll me around! roll me around!" His mother pushed him about in her sleep, until she fell too soundly aslumbering; then she stopped. But Little

Jack Rollaround kept on crying, "Roll around! roll around!"

By and by the Moon peeped in at the window. He saw a funny sight: Little Jack Rollaround was lying in his trundle-bed, and he had put up one little fat leg for a mast, and fastened the corner of his wee shirt to it for a sail; and he was blowing at it with all his might, and saying, "Roll around! roll around!" Slowly, slowly, the little trundle-bed boat began to move; it sailed along the floor and up the wall and across the ceiling and down again!

"More! more!" cried Little Jack Rollaround; and the little boat sailed faster up the wall, across the ceiling, down the wall, and over the floor. The Moon laughed at the sight; but when Little Jack Rollaround saw the Moon, he called out, "Open the door, old Moon! I want to roll through the town, so that the people can see me!"

The Moon could not open the door, but he shone in through the keyhole, in a broad band. And Little

Jack Rollaround sailed his trundle-bed boat up the beam, through the keyhole, and into the street.

"Make a light, old Moon," he said; "I want the people to see me!"

So the good Moon made a light and went along with him, and the little trundle-bed boat went sailing down the streets into the main street of the village. They rolled past the town hall and the schoolhouse and the church; but nobody saw Little Jack Rollaround, because everybody was in bed, asleep.

"Why don't the people come to see me?" he shouted.

High up on the church steeple, the Weather-vane answered, "It is no time for people to be in the streets; decent folk are in their beds."

"Then I'll go to the woods, so that the animals may see me," said Little Jack. "Come along, old Moon, and make a light!"

The good Moon went along and made a light, and they came to the forest. "Roll! roll!" cried the little boy; and the trundle-bed went trundling among the

trees in the great wood, scaring up the chipmunks and startling the little leaves on the trees. The poor old Moon began to have a bad time of it, for the tree-trunks got in his way so that he could not go so fast as the bed, and every time he got behind, the little boy called, "Hurry up, old Moon, I want the beasts to see me!"

But all the animals were asleep, and nobody at all looked at Little Jack Rollaround except an old White Owl; and all she said was, "Who are you?"

The little boy did not like her, so he blew harder, and the trundle-bed boat went sailing through the forest till it came to the end of the world.

"I must go home now; it is late," said the Moon.

"I will go with you; make a path!" said Little Jack Rollaround.

The kind Moon made a path up to the sky, and up sailed the little bed into the midst of the sky. All the little bright Stars were there with their nice little lamps. And when he saw them, that naughty Little

Jack Rollaround began to tease. "Out of the way, there! I am coming!" he shouted, and sailed the trundle-bed boat straight at them. He bumped the little Stars right and left, all over the sky, until every one of them put his little lamp out and left it dark.

"Do not treat the little Stars so," said the good Moon.

But Jack Rollaround only behaved the worse: "Get out of the way, old Moon!" he shouted, "I am coming!"

And he steered the little trundle-bed straight into the old Moon's face, and bumped his nose!

This was too much for the good Moon; he put out his big light, all at once, and left the sky pitch-black.

"Make a light, old Moon! Make a light!" shouted the little boy. But the Moon answered never a word, and Jack Rollaround could not see where to steer. He went rolling criss-cross, up and down, all over the sky, knocking into the planets and stumbling into the clouds, till he did not know where he was.

"ALL SHE SAID WAS, 'WHO ARE YOU?'"

Suddenly he saw a big yellow light at the very edge of the sky. He thought it was the Moon. "Look out, I am coming!" he cried, and steered for the light.

But it was not the kind old Moon at all; it was the great mother Sun, just coming up out of her home in the sea, to begin her day's work.

"Aha, youngster, what are you doing in my sky?" she said. And she picked Little Jack Rollaround up and threw him, trundle-bed boat and all, into the middle of the sea!

And I suppose he is there yet, unless somebody picked him out again.

HOW BROTHER RABBIT FOOLED THE WHALE AND THE ELEPHANT

One day little Brother Rabbit was running along on the sand, lippety, lippety, when he saw the Whale and the Elephant talking together. Little Brother Rabbit crouched down and listened to what they were saying. This was what they were saying: —

"You are the biggest thing on the land, Brother Elephant," said the Whale, "and I am the biggest thing in the sea; if we join together we can rule all the animals in the world, and have our way about everything."

"Very good, very good," trumpeted the Elephant; "that suits me; we will do it."

Little Brother Rabbit snickered to himself. "They won't rule me," he said. He ran away and got a very long, very strong rope, and he got his big drum, and

hid the drum a long way off in the bushes. Then he went along the beach till he came to the Whale.

"Oh, please, dear, strong Mr. Whale," he said, "will you have the great kindness to do me a favour? My cow is stuck in the mud, a quarter of a mile from here. And I can't pull her out. But you are so strong and so obliging, that I venture to trust you will help me out."

The Whale was so pleased with the compliment that he said, "Yes," at once.

"Then," said the Rabbit, "I will tie this end of my long rope to you, and I will run away and tie the other end round my cow, and when I am ready I will beat my big drum. When you hear that, pull very, very hard, for the cow is stuck very deep in the mud."

"Huh!" grunted the Whale, "I'll pull her out, if she is stuck to the horns."

Little Brother Rabbit tied the rope-end to the Whale, and ran off, lippety, lippety, till he came to the place where the Elephant was.

"Oh, please, mighty and kindly Elephant," he said, making a very low bow, "will you do me a favor?"

"What is it?" asked the Elephant.

"My cow is stuck in the mud, about a quarter of a mile from here," said little Brother Rabbit, "and I cannot pull her out. Of course you could. If you will be so very obliging as to help me —"

"Certainly," said the Elephant grandly, "certainly."

"Then," said little Brother Rabbit, "I will tie one end of this long rope to your trunk, and the other to my cow, and as soon as I have tied her tightly I will beat my big drum. When you hear that, pull; pull as hard as you can, for my cow is very heavy."

"Never fear," said the Elephant, "I could pull twenty cows."

"I am sure you could," said the Rabbit, politely, "only be sure to begin gently, and pull harder and harder till you get her."

Then he tied the end of the rope tightly round the

Elephant's trunk, and ran away into the bushes. There he sat down and beat the big drum.

The Whale began to pull and the Elephant began to pull, and in a jiffy the rope tightened till it was stretched as hard as could be.

"This is a remarkably heavy cow," said the Elephant; "but I 'll fetch her!" And he braced his forefeet in the earth, and gave a tremendous pull.

"Dear me!" said the Whale. "That cow must be stuck mighty tight;" and he drove his tail deep in the water, and gave a marvelous pull.

He pulled harder; the Elephant pulled harder. Pretty soon the Whale found himself sliding toward the land. The reason was, of course, that the Elephant had something solid to brace against, and, too, as fast as he pulled the rope in a little, he took a turn with it round his trunk!

But when the Whale found himself sliding toward the land he was so provoked with the cow that he dove head first, down to the bottom of the sea. That

was a pull! The Elephant was jerked off his feet, and came slipping and sliding to the beach, and into the surf. He was terribly angry. He braced himself with all his might, and pulled his best. At the jerk, up came the Whale out of the water.

"Who is pulling me?" spouted the Whale.

"Who is pulling me?" trumpeted the Elephant.

And then each saw the rope in the other's hold.

"I'll teach you to play cow!" roared the Elephant.

"I'll show you how to fool me!" fumed the Whale. And they began to pull again. But this time the rope broke, the Whale turned a somersault, and the Elephant fell over backwards.

At that, they were both so ashamed that neither would speak to the other. So that broke up the bargain between them.

And little Brother Rabbit sat in the bushes and laughed, and laughed, and laughed.

"THE ELEPHANT . . . BRACED HIMSELF WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, AND PULLED HIS BEST"

THE LITTLE HALF-CHICK

There was once upon a time a Spanish Hen, who hatched out some nice little chickens. She was much pleased with their looks as they came from the shell. One, two, three, came out plump and fluffy; but when the fourth shell broke, out came a little half-chick! It had only one leg and one wing and one eye! It was just half a chicken.

The Hen-mother did not know what in the world to do with the queer little Half-Chick. She was afraid something would happen to it, and she tried hard to protect it and keep it from harm. But as soon as it could walk the little Half-Chick showed a most headstrong spirit, worse than any of its brothers. It would not mind, and it would go wherever it wanted to; it walked with a funny little hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick, and got along pretty fast.

One day the little Half-Chick said, "Mother, I am off to Madrid, to see the King! Good-by."

The poor Hen-mother did everything she could think of to keep him from doing so foolish a thing, but the little Half-Chick laughed at her naughtily. "I'm for seeing the King," he said; "this life is too quiet for me." And away he went, hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick, over the fields.

When he had gone some distance the little Half-Chick came to a little brook that was caught in the weeds and in much trouble.

"Little Half-Chick," whispered the Water, "I am so choked with these weeds that I cannot move; I am almost lost, for want of room; please push the sticks and weeds away with your bill and help me."

"The idea!" said the little Half-Chick. "I cannot be bothered with you; I am off for Madrid, to see the King!" And in spite of the brook's begging he went away, hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick.

A bit farther on, the Half-Chick came to a Fire,

which was smothered in damp sticks and in great distress.

"Oh, little Half-Chick," said the Fire, "you are just in time to save me. I am almost dead for want of air. Fan me a little with your wing, I beg."

"The idea!" said the little Half-Chick. "I cannot be bothered with you; I am off to Madrid, to see the King!" And he went laughing off, hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick.

When he had hoppity-kicked a good way, and was near Madrid, he came to a clump of bushes, where the Wind was caught fast. The Wind was whimpering, and begging to be set free.

"Little Half-Chick," said the Wind, "you are just in time to help me; if you will brush aside these twigs and leaves, I can get my breath; help me, quickly!"

"Ho! the idea!" said the little Half-Chick. "I have no time to bother with you. I am going to Madrid to see the King." And he went off, hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick, leaving the Wind to smother.

After a while he came to Madrid and to the palace of the King. Hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick, the little Half-Chick skipped past the sentry at the gate, and hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick, he crossed the court. But as he was passing the windows of the kitchen the Cook looked out and saw him.

"The very thing for the King's dinner!" she said. "I was needing a chicken!" And she seized the little Half-Chick by his one wing and threw him into a kettle of water on the fire.

The Water came over the little Half-Chick's feathers, over his head, into his eye. It was terribly uncomfortable. The little Half-Chick cried out, —

"Water, don't drown me! Stay down, don't come so high!"

But the Water said, "Little Half-Chick, little Half-Chick, when I was in trouble you would not help me," and came higher than ever.

Now the Water grew warm, hot, hotter, frightfully hot; the little Half-Chick cried out, "Do not

burn so hot, Fire! You are burning me to death! Stop!"

But the Fire said, "Little Half-Chick, little Half-Chick, when I was in trouble you would not help me," and burned hotter than ever.

Just as the little Half-Chick thought he must suffocate, the Cook took the cover off, to look at the dinner. "Dear me," she said, "this chicken is no good; it is burned to a cinder." And she picked the little Half-Chick up by one leg and threw him out of the window.

In the air he was caught by a breeze and taken up higher than the trees. Round and round he was twirled till he was so dizzy he thought he must perish. "Don't blow me so, Wind," he cried, "let me down!"

"Little Half-Chick, little Half-Chick," said the Wind, "when I was in trouble you would not help me!" And the Wind blew him straight up to the top of the church steeple, and stuck him there, fast!

There he stands to this day, with his one eye, his one wing, and his one leg. He cannot hoppity-kick any more, but he turns slowly round when the wind blows, and keeps his head toward it, to hear what it says.

THE STORY OF EPAMINONDAS AND HIS AUNTIE

Epaminondas used to go to see his Auntie 'most every day, and she nearly always gave him something to take home to his Mammy.

One day she gave him a big piece of cake; nice, yellow, rich gold-cake.

Epaminondas took it in his fist and held it all scrunched up tight, like this, and came along home. By the time he got home there was n't anything left but a fistful of crumbs. His Mammy said, —

"What you got there, Epaminondas?"

"Cake, Mammy," said Epaminondas.

"Cake!" said his Mammy. "Epaminondas, you ain't got the sense you was born with! That's no way to carry cake. The way to carry cake is to wrap it all up nice in some leaves and put it in your hat, and put

your hat on your head, and come along home. You hear me, Epaminondas?"

"Yes, Mammy," said Epaminondas.

Next day Epaminondas went to see his Auntie, and she gave him a pound of butter for his Mammy; fine, fresh, sweet, butter.

Epaminondas wrapped it up in leaves and put it in his hat, and put his hat on his head, and came along home. It was a very hot day. Pretty soon the butter began to melt. It melted, and melted, and as it melted it ran down Epaminondas' forehead; then it ran over his face, and in his ears, and down his neck. When he got home, all the butter Epaminondas had was *on him*. His Mammy looked at him, and then she said, —

"Law's sake! Epaminondas, what you got in your hat?"

"Butter, Mammy," said Epaminondas; "Auntie gave it to me."

"Butter!" said his Mammy. "Epaminondas, you

"'DON'T YOU KNOW THAT 'S NO WAY TO CARRY BUTTER?'"

ain't got the sense you was born with! Don't you know that 's no way to carry butter? The way to carry butter is to wrap it up in some leaves and take it down to the brook, and cool it in the water, and cool it in the water, and cool it in the water, and then take it on your hands, careful, and bring it along home."

"Yes, Mammy," said Epaminondas.

By and by, another day, Epaminondas went to see his Auntie again, and this time she gave him a little new puppy-dog to take home.

Epaminondas put it in some leaves and took it down to the brook; and there he cooled it in the water, and cooled it in the water, and cooled it in the water; then he took it in his hands and came along home. When he got home, the puppy-dog was dead. His Mammy looked at it, and she said, —

"Law's sake! Epaminondas, what you got there?"

"A puppy-dog, Mammy," said Epaminondas.

"A *puppy-dog!*" said his Mammy. "My gracious

sakes alive, Epaminondas, you ain't got the sense you was born with! That ain't the way to carry a puppy-dog! The way to carry a puppy-dog is to take a long piece of string and tie one end of it round the puppy-dog's neck, and put the puppy-dog on the ground, and take hold of the other end of the string and come along home, like this."

"All right, Mammy," said Epaminondas.

Next day, Epaminondas went to see his Auntie again, and when he came to go home she gave him a loaf of bread to carry to his Mammy; a brown, fresh, crusty loaf of bread.

So Epaminondas tied a string around the end of the loaf and took hold of the end of the string and came along home, like this. [Imitate dragging something along the ground.] When he got home his Mammy looked at the thing on the end of the string, and she said, —

"My laws a-massy! Epaminondas, what you got on the end of that string?"

"Bread, Mammy," said Epaminondas; "Auntie gave it to me."

"Bread!!!" said his Mammy. "O Epaminondas, Epaminondas, you ain't got the sense you was born with; you never did have the sense you was born with; you never will have the sense you was born with! Now I ain't gwine tell you any more ways to bring truck home. And don't you go see your Auntie, neither. I 'll go see her my own self. But I 'll just tell you one thing, Epaminondas! you see these here six mince pies I done make? You see how I done set 'em on the doorstep to cool? Well, now, you hear me, Epaminondas, *you be careful how you step on those pies!*"

"Yes, Mammy," said Epaminondas.

Then Epaminondas' Mammy put on her bonnet and her shawl and took a basket in her hand and went away to see Auntie. The six mince pies sat cooling in a row on the doorstep.

And then, — and then, — Epaminondas *was* careful how he stepped on those pies!

He stepped [imitate] — right — in — the — middle — of — every — one.

. . . . . .

And, do you know, children, nobody knows what happened next! The person who told me the story did n't know; nobody knows. But you can guess.

THE LITTLE JACKAL AND THE ALLIGATOR

The little Jackal was very fond of shell-fish. He used to go down by the river and hunt along the edges for crabs and such things. And once, when he was hunting for crabs, he was so hungry that he put his paw into the water after a crab without looking first, — which you never should do! The minute he put in his paw, *snap!* — the big Alligator who lives in the mud down there had it in his jaws.

"Oh, dear!" thought the little Jackal; "the big Alligator has my paw in his mouth! In another minute he will pull me down and gobble me up! What shall I do? what shall I do?" Then he thought, suddenly, "I 'll deceive him!"

So he put on a very cheerful voice, as if nothing at all were the matter, and he said, —

"Ho! ho! Clever Mr. Alligator! Smart Mr. Alliga-

tor, to take that old bulrush root for my paw! I hope you'll find it very tender!"

The old Alligator was hidden away beneath the mud and bulrush leaves, and he could n't see anything. He thought, "Pshaw! I 've made a mistake." So he opened his mouth and let the little Jackal go.

The little Jackal ran away as fast as he could, and as he ran he called out,—

"Thank you, Mr. Alligator! Kind Mr. Alligator! *So* kind of you to let me go!"

The old Alligator lashed with his tail and snapped with his jaws, but it was too late; the little Jackal was out of reach.

After this the little Jackal kept away from the river, out of danger. But after about a week he got such an appetite for crabs that nothing else would do at all; he felt that he must have a crab. So he went down by the river and looked all around, very carefully. He did n't see the old Alligator, but he thought to himself, "I think I 'll not take any chances." So he

"'SMART MR. ALLIGATOR, TO TAKE THAT OLD BULRUSH ROOT FOR MY PAW!'"

stood still and began to talk out loud to himself. He said, —

"When I don't see any little crabs on the land I most generally see them sticking out of the water, and then I put my paw in and catch them. I wonder if there are any fat little crabs in the water to-day?"

The old Alligator was hidden down in the mud at the bottom of the river, and when he heard what the little Jackal said, he thought, "Aha! I'll pretend to be a little crab, and when he puts his paw in, I'll make my dinner of him." So he stuck the black end of his snout above the water and waited.

The little Jackal took one look, and then he said, —

"Thank you, Mr. Alligator! Kind Mr. Alligator! You are *exceedingly* kind to show me where you are! I will have dinner elsewhere." And he ran away like the wind.

The old Alligator foamed at the mouth, he was so angry, but the little Jackal was gone.

For two whole weeks the little Jackal kept away from the river. Then, one day, he got a feeling inside him that nothing but crabs could satisfy; he felt that he must have at least one crab. Very cautiously, he went down to the river and looked all around. He saw no sign of the old Alligator. Still, he did not mean to take any chances. So he stood quite still and began to talk to himself, — it was a little way he had. He said, —

"When I don't see any little crabs on the shore, or sticking up out of the water, I usually see them blowing bubbles from under the water; the little bubbles go *puff*, *puff*, *puff*, and then they go *pop*, *pop*, *pop*, and they show me where the little juicy crabs are, so I can put my paw in and catch them. I wonder if I shall see any little bubbles to-day?"

The old Alligator, lying low in the mud and weeds, heard this, and he thought, "Pooh! *That's* easy enough; I'll just blow some little crab-bubbles, and then he will put his paw in where I can get it."

So he blew, and he blew, a mighty blast, and the bubbles rose in a perfect whirlpool, fizzing and swirling.

The little Jackal did n't have to be told who was underneath those bubbles: he took one quick look, and off he ran. But as he went, he sang, —

"Thank you, Mr. Alligator! Kind Mr. Alligator! You are the kindest Alligator in the world, to show me where you are, so nicely! I'll breakfast at another part of the river."

The old Alligator was so furious that he crawled up on the bank and went after the little Jackal; but dear, dear, he could n't catch the little Jackal; he ran far too fast.

After this, the little Jackal did not like to risk going near the water, so he ate no more crabs. But he found a garden of wild figs, which were so good that he went there every day, and ate them instead of shell-fish.

Now the old Alligator found this out, and he made

up his mind to have the little Jackal for supper, or to die trying. So he crept, and crawled, and dragged himself over the ground to the garden of wild figs. There he made a huge pile of figs under the biggest of the wild fig trees, and hid himself in the pile.

After a while the little Jackal came dancing into the garden, very happy and care-free, — *but* looking all around. He saw the huge pile of figs under the big fig tree.

"H-m," he thought, "that looks singularly like my friend, the Alligator. I 'll investigate a bit."

He stood quite still and began to talk to himself, — it was a little way he had. He said, —

"The little figs I like best are the fat, ripe, juicy ones that drop off when the breeze blows; and then the wind blows them about on the ground, this way and that; the great heap of figs over there is so still that I think they must be all bad figs."

The old Alligator, underneath his fig pile, thought —

"Bother the suspicious little Jackal! I shall have

to make these figs roll about, so that he will think the wind moves them." And straightway he humped himself up and moved, and sent the little figs flying, — and his back showed through.

The little Jackal did not wait for a second look. He ran out of the garden like the wind. But as he ran he called back, —

"Thank you, again, Mr. Alligator; very sweet of you to show me where you are; I can't stay to thank you as I should like: good-by!"

At this the old Alligator was beside himself with rage. He vowed that he would have the little Jackal for supper this time, come what might. So he crept and crawled over the ground till he came to the little Jackal's house. Then he crept and crawled inside, and hid himself there in the house, to wait till the little Jackal should come home.

By and by the little Jackal came dancing home, happy and care-free, — *but* looking all around. Presently, as he came along, he saw that the ground

was all scratched up as if something very heavy had been dragged over it. The little Jackal stopped and looked.

"What 's this? what 's this?" he said.

Then he saw that the door of his house was crushed at the sides and broken, as if something very big had gone through it.

"What's this? What's this?" the little Jackal said. "I think I 'll investigate a little!"

So he stood quite still and began to talk to himself (you remember, it was a little way he had), but loudly. He said, —

"How strange that my little House does n't speak to me! Why don't you speak to me, little House? You always speak to me, if everything is all right, when I come home. I wonder if anything is wrong with my little House?"

The old Alligator thought to himself that he must certainly pretend to be the little House, or the little Jackal would never come in. So he put on as pleasant

a voice as he could (which is not saying much) and said, —

"Hullo, little Jackal!"

Oh! when the little Jackal heard that, he was frightened enough for once.

"It 's the old Alligator," he said, "and if I don't make an end of him this time he will certainly make an end of me. What shall I do?"

He thought very fast. Then he spoke out pleasantly.

"Thank you, little House," he said, "it 's good to hear your pretty voice, dear little House, and I will be in with you in a minute; only first I must gather some firewood for dinner."

Then he went and gathered firewood, and more firewood, and more firewood; and he piled it all up solid against the door and round the house; and then he set fire to it!

And it smoked and burned till it smoked that old Alligator to smoked herring!

THE LITTLE FIR TREE

Once there was a Little Fir Tree, slim and pointed, and shiny, which stood in the great forest in the midst of some big fir trees, broad, and tall, and shadowy green. The Little Fir Tree was very unhappy because he was not big like the others. When the birds came flying into the woods and lit on the branches of the big trees and built their nests there, he used to call up to them, —

"Come down, come down, rest in my branches!" But they always said, —

"Oh, no, no; you are too little!"

And when the splendid wind came blowing and singing through the forest, it bent and rocked and swung the tops of the big trees, and murmured to them. Then the Little Fir Tree looked up, and called, —

"Oh, please, dear wind, come down and play with me!" But he always said, —

"Oh, no; you are too little, you are too little!"

And in the winter the white snow fell softly, softly, and covered the great trees all over with wonderful caps and coats of white. The Little Fir Tree, close down in the cover of the others, would call up, —

"Oh, please, dear snow, give me a cap, too! I want to play, too!" But the snow always said, —

"Oh no, no, no; you are too little, you are too little!"

The worst of all was when men came into the wood, with sledges and teams of horses. They came to cut the big trees down and carry them away. And when one had been cut down and carried away the others talked about it, and nodded their heads. And the Little Fir Tree listened, and heard them say that when you were carried away so you might become the mast of a mighty ship, and go far away over the ocean, and see many wonderful things; or you might be part of a

fine house in a great city, and see much of life. The Little Fir Tree wanted greatly to see life, but he was always too little; the men passed by him.

But by and by, one cold winter's morning, men came with a sledge and horses, and after they had cut here and there they came to the circle of trees round the Little Fir Tree, and looked all about.

"There are none little enough," they said.

Oh! how the Little Fir Tree pricked up his needles!

"Here is one," said one of the men, "it is just little enough." And he touched the Little Fir Tree.

The Little Fir Tree was happy as a bird, because he knew they were about to cut him down. And when he was being carried away on the sledge he lay wondering, *so* contentedly, whether he should be the mast of a ship or part of a fine city house. But when they came to the town he was taken out and set upright in a tub and placed on the edge of a sidewalk in a row of other fir trees, all small, but none so little as he. And then the Little Fir Tree began to see life.

People kept coming to look at the trees and to take them away. But always when they saw the Little Fir Tree they shook their heads and said, —

"It is too little, too little."

Until, finally, two children came along, hand in hand, looking carefully at all the small trees. When they saw the Little Fir Tree they cried out, —

"We 'll take this one; it is just little enough!"

They took him out of his tub and carried him away, between them. And the happy Little Fir Tree spent all his time wondering what it could be that he was just little enough for; he knew it could hardly be a mast or a house, since he was going away with children.

He kept wondering, while they took him in through some big doors, and set him up in another tub, on the table, in a bare little room. Pretty soon they went away, and came back again with a big basket, carried between them. Then some pretty ladies, with white caps on their heads and white aprons over their blue dresses, came bringing little parcels. The children

took things out of the basket and began to play with the Little Fir Tree, just as he had often begged the wind and the snow and the birds to do. He felt their soft little touches on his head and his twigs and his branches. And when he looked down at himself, as far as he could look, he saw that he was all hung with gold and silver chains! There were strings of white fluffy stuff drooping around him; his twigs held little gold nuts and pink, rosy balls and silver stars; he had pretty little pink and white candles in his arms; but last, and most wonderful of all, the children hung a beautiful white, floating doll-angel over his head! The Little Fir Tree could not breathe, for joy and wonder. What was it that he was, now? Why was this glory for him?

After a time every one went away and left him. It grew dusk, and the Little Fir Tree began to hear strange sounds through the closed doors. Sometimes he heard a child crying. He was beginning to be lonely. It grew more and more shadowy.

All at once, the doors opened and the two children came in. Two of the pretty ladies were with them. They came up to the Little Fir Tree and quickly lighted all the little pink and white candles. Then the two pretty ladies took hold of the table with the Little Fir Tree on it and pushed it, very smoothly and quickly, out of the doors, across a hall, and in at another door.

The Little Fir Tree had a sudden sight of a long room with many little white beds in it, of children propped up on pillows in the beds, and of other children in great wheeled chairs, and others hobbling about or sitting in little chairs. He wondered why all the little children looked so white and tired; he did not know that he was in a hospital. But before he could wonder any more his breath was quite taken away by the shout those little white children gave.

"Oh! oh! m-m! m-m!" they cried.

"How pretty! How beautiful! Oh is n't it lovely!"

He knew they must mean him, for all their shin-

ing eyes were looking straight at him. He stood as straight as a mast, and quivered in every needle, for joy. Presently one little weak child-voice called out,—

"It 's the nicest Christmas tree I ever saw!"

And then, at last, the Little Fir Tree knew what he was; he was a Christmas tree! And from his shiny head to his feet he was glad, through and through, because he was just little enough to be the nicest kind of tree in the world!

WHO KILLED THE OTTER'S BABIES?

Once the Otter came to the Mouse-deer and said, "Friend Mouse-deer, will you please take care of my babies while I go to the river, to catch fish?"

"Certainly," said the Mouse-deer, "go along."

But when the Otter came back from the river, with a string of fish, he found his babies crushed flat.

"What does this mean, Friend Mouse-deer?" he said. "Who killed my children while you were taking care of them?"

"I am very sorry," said the Mouse-deer, "but you know I am Chief Dancer of the War-dance, and the Woodpecker came and sounded the war-gong, so I danced. I forgot your children, and trod on them."

"I shall go to King Solomon," said the Otter, "and you shall be punished."

Soon the Mouse-deer was called before King Solomon.

"Did you kill the Otter's babies?" said the king.

"Yes, your Majesty," said the Mouse-deer, "but I did not mean to."

"How did it happen?" said the king.

"Your Majesty knows," said the Mouse-deer, "that I am Chief Dancer of the War-dance. The Woodpecker came and sounded the war-gong, and I had to dance; and as I danced I trod on the Otter's children."

"Send for the Woodpecker," said King Solomon. And when the Woodpecker came, he said to him, "Was it you who sounded the war-gong?"

"Yes, your Majesty," said the Woodpecker, "but I had to."

"Why?" said the king.

"Your Majesty knows," said the Woodpecker, "that I am Chief Beater of the War-gong, and I sounded the gong because I saw the Great Lizard wearing his sword."

"Send for the Great Lizard," said King Solomon.

When the Great Lizard came, he asked him, "Was it you who were wearing your sword?"

"Yes, your Majesty," said the Great Lizard; "but I had to."

"Why?" said the king.

"Your Majesty knows," said the Great Lizard, "that I am Chief Protector of the Sword. I wore my sword because the Tortoise came wearing his coat of mail."

So the Tortoise was sent for.

"Why did you wear your coat of mail?" said the king.

"I put it on, your Majesty," said the Tortoise, "because I saw the King-crab trailing his three-edged pike."

Then the King-crab was sent for.

"Why were you trailing your three-edged pike?" said King Solomon.

"Because, your Majesty," said the King-crab, "I saw that the Crayfish had shouldered his lance."

Immediately the Crayfish was sent for.

"Why did you shoulder your lance?" said the king.

"Because, your Majesty," said the Crayfish, "I saw the Otter coming down to the river to kill my children."

"Oh," said King Solomon, "if that is the case, the Otter killed the Otter's children. And the Mouse-deer cannot be held, by the law of the land!"

THE NIGHTINGALE

A long, long time ago, as long ago as when there were fairies, there lived an emperor in China, who had a most beautiful palace, all made of crystal. Outside the palace was the loveliest garden in the whole world, and farther away was a forest where the trees were taller than any other trees in the world, and farther away, still, was a deep wood. And in this wood lived a little Nightingale. The Nightingale sang so beautifully that everybody who heard her remembered her better than anything else that he heard or saw. People came from all over the world to see the crystal palace and the wonderful garden and the great forest; but when they went home and wrote books about these things they always wrote, "But the Nightingale is the best of all."

At last it happened that the Emperor came upon a

book which said this, and he at once sent for his Chamberlain.

"Who is this Nightingale?" said the Emperor. "Why have I never heard him sing?"

The Chamberlain, who was a very important person, said, "There cannot be any such person; I have never heard his name."

"The book says there is a Nightingale," said the Emperor. "I command that the Nightingale be brought here to sing for me this evening."

The Chamberlain went out and asked all the great lords and ladies and pages where the Nightingale could be found, but not one of them had ever heard of him. So the Chamberlain went back to the Emperor and said, "There is no such person."

"The book says there is a Nightingale," said the Emperor; "if the Nightingale is not here to sing for me this evening I will have the court trampled upon, immediately after supper."

The Chamberlain did not want to be trampled upon,

so he ran out and asked everybody in the palace about the Nightingale. At last, a little girl who worked in the kitchen to help the cook's helper, said, "Oh, yes, I know the Nightingale very well. Every night when I go to carry scraps from the kitchen to my mother, who lives in the wood beyond the forest, I hear the Nightingale sing."

The Chamberlain asked the little cook-maid to take him to the Nightingale's home, and many of the lords and ladies followed after. When they had gone a little way, they heard a cow moo.

"Ah!" said the lords and ladies, "that must be the Nightingale; what a large voice for so small a creature!"

"Oh, no," said the little girl, "that is just a cow, mooing."

A little farther on they heard some bullfrogs, in a swamp. "Surely that is the Nightingale," said the courtiers; "it really sound like church-bells!"

"Oh, no," said the little girl, "those are bullfrogs, croaking."

At last they came to the wood where the Nightingale was. "Hush!" said the little girl, "she is going to sing." And, sure enough, the little Nightingale began to sing. She sang so beautifully that you have never in all your life heard anything like it.

"Dear, dear," said the courtiers, "that is very pleasant; does that little gray bird really make all that noise? She is so pale that I think she has lost her color for fear of us."

The Chamberlain asked the little Nightingale to come and sing for the Emperor. The little Nightingale said she could sing better in her own greenwood, but she was so sweet and kind that she came with them.

That evening the palace was all trimmed with the most beautiful flowers you can imagine, and rows and rows of little silver bells, that tinkled when the wind blew in, and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of

wax candles, that shone like tiny stars. In the great hall there was a gold perch for the Nightingale, beside the Emperor's throne.

When all the people were there, the Emperor asked the Nightingale to sing. Then the little gray Nightingale filled her throat full, and sang. And, my dears, she sang so beautifully that the Emperor's eyes filled up with tears! And, you know, emperors do not cry at all easily. So he asked her to sing again, and this time she sang so marvelously that the tears came out of his eyes and ran down his cheeks. That was a great success. They asked the little Nightingale to sing, over and over again, and when they had listened enough the Emperor said that she should be made "Singer in Chief to the Court." She was to have a golden perch near the Emperor's bed, and a little gold cage, and was to be allowed to go out twice every day. But there were twelve servants appointed to wait on her, and those twelve servants went with her every time she went out, and each of the twelve had

hold of the end of a silken string which was tied to the little Nightingale's leg! It was not so very much fun to go out that way!

For a long, long time the Nightingale sang every evening to the Emperor and his court, and they liked her so much that the ladies all tried to sound like her; they used to put water in their mouths and then make little sounds like this: *glu-glu-glug.* And when the courtiers met each other in the halls, one would say "Night," and the other would say "ingale," and that was conversation.

At last, one day, there came a little package to the Emperor, on the outside of which was written, "The Nightingale." Inside was an artificial bird, something like a nightingale, only it was made of gold, and silver, and rubies, and emeralds, and diamonds. When it was wound up it played a waltz tune, and as it played it moved its little tail up and down. Everybody in the court was filled with delight at the music of the new nightingale. They made it sing that same tune

thirty-three times, and still they had not had enough. They would have made it sing the tune thirty-four times, but the Emperor said, "I should like to hear the real Nightingale sing, now."

But when they looked about for the real little Nightingale, they could not find her anywhere! She had taken the chance, while everybody was listening to the waltz tune, to fly away through the window to her own greenwood.

"What a very ungrateful bird!" said the lords and ladies. "But it does not matter; the new nightingale is just as good."

So the artificial nightingale was given the real Nightingale's little gold perch, and every night the Emperor wound her up, and she sang her waltz tune to him. The people in the court liked her even better than the old Nightingale, because they could all whistle her tune, — which you can't do with real nightingales.

About a year after the artificial nightingale came,

the Emperor was listening to her waltz tune, when there was a *snap* and *whir-r-r* inside the bird, and the music stopped. The Emperor ran to his doctor, but he could not do anything. Then he ran to his clock-maker, but he could not do much. Nobody could do much. The best they could do was to patch the gold nightingale up so that it could sing once a year; even that was almost too much, and the tune was pretty shaky. Still, the Emperor kept the gold nightingale on the perch in his own room.

A long time went by, and then, at last, the Emperor grew very ill, and was about to die. When it was sure that he could not live much longer, the people chose a new emperor and waited for the old one to die. The poor Emperor lay, quite cold and pale, in his great big bed, with velvet curtains, and tall candlesticks all about. He was quite alone, for all the courtiers had gone to congratulate the new emperor, and all the servants had gone to talk it over.

When the Emperor woke up, he felt a terrible

weight on his chest. He opened his eyes, and there was Death, sitting on his heart. Death had put on the Emperor's gold crown, and he had the gold sceptre in one hand, and the silken banner in the other; and he looked at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes. The room was full of shadows, and the shadows were full of faces. Everywhere the Emperor looked, there were faces. Some were very, very ugly, and some were sweet and lovely; they were all the things the Emperor had done in his life, good and bad. And as he looked at them they began to whisper. They whispered, "*Do you remember this?*" "*Do you remember that?*" The Emperor remembered so much that he cried out loud, "Oh, bring the great drum! Make music, so that I may not hear these dreadful whispers!" But there was nobody there to bring the drum.

Then the Emperor cried, "You little gold nightingale, can you not sing something for me? I have given you gifts of gold and jewels, and kept you always by my side; will you not help me now?" But

there was nobody to wind the little gold nightingale up, and of course it could not sing.

The Emperor's heart grew colder and colder where Death crouched upon it, and the dreadful whispers grew louder and louder, and the Emperor's life was almost gone. Suddenly, through the open window, there came a most lovely song. It was so sweet and so loud that the whispers died quite away. Presently the Emperor felt his heart grow warm, then he felt the blood flow through his limbs again; he listened to the song until the tears ran down his cheeks; he knew that it was the little real Nightingale who had flown away from him when the gold nightingale came.

Death was listening to the song, too; and when it was done and the Emperor begged for more, Death, too, said, "Please sing again, little Nightingale!"

"Will you give me the Emperor's gold crown for a song?" said the little Nightingale.

"Yes," said Death; and the little Nightingale bought the Emperor's crown for a song.

"Oh, sing again, little Nightingale," begged Death.

"Will you give me the Emperor's sceptre for another song?" said the little gray Nightingale.

"Yes," said Death; and the little Nightingale bought the Emperor's sceptre for another song.

Once more Death begged for a song, and this time the little Nightingale got the banner for her singing. Then she sang one more song, so sweet and so sad that it made Death think of his garden in the churchyard, where he always liked best to be. And he rose from the Emperor's heart and floated away through the window.

When Death was gone, the Emperor said to the little Nightingale, "Oh, dear little Nightingale, you have saved me from Death! Do not leave me again. Stay with me on this little gold perch, and sing to me always!"

"No, dear Emperor," said the little Nightingale, "I sing best when I am free; I cannot live in a palace. But every night when you are quite alone, I will come

and sit in the window and sing to you, and tell you everything that goes on in your kingdom: I will tell you where the poor people are who ought to be helped, and where the wicked people are who ought to be punished. Only, dear Emperor, be sure that you never let anybody know that you have a little bird who tells you everything."

After the little Nightingale had flown away, the Emperor felt so well and strong that he dressed himself in his royal robes and took his gold sceptre in his hand. And when the courtiers came in to see if he were dead, there stood the Emperor with his sword in one hand and his sceptre in the other, and said, "Good-morning!"

ROBERT OF SICILY

An old legend says that there was once a king named Robert of Sicily, who was brother to the great Pope of Rome and to the Emperor of Allemaine. He was a very selfish king, and very proud; he cared more for his pleasures than for the needs of his people, and his heart was so filled with his own greatness that he had no thought for God.

One day, this proud king was sitting in his place at church, at vesper service; his courtiers were about him, in their bright garments, and he himself was dressed in his royal robes. The choir was chanting the Latin service, and as the beautiful voices swelled louder, the king noticed one particular verse which seemed to be repeated again and again. He turned to a learned clerk at his side and asked what those words meant, for he knew no Latin.

"They mean, 'He hath put down the mighty from

their seat, and hath exalted them of low degree,'" answered the clerk.

"It is well the words are in Latin, then," said the king angrily, "for they are a lie. There is no power on earth or in heaven which can put me down from my seat!" And he sneered at the beautiful singing, as he leaned back in his place.

Presently the king fell asleep, while the service went on. He slept deeply and long. When he awoke the church was dark and still, and he was all alone. He, the king, had been left alone in the church, to awake in the dark! He was furious with rage and surprise, and, stumbling through the dim aisles, he reached the great doors and beat at them, madly, shouting for his servants.

The old sexton heard some one shouting and pounding in the church, and thought it was some drunken vagabond who had stolen in during the service. He came to the door with his keys and called out, "Who is there?"

"Open! open! It is I, the king!" came a hoarse, angry voice from within.

"It is a crazy man," thought the sexton; and he was frightened. He opened the doors carefully and stood back, peering into the darkness. Out past him rushed the figure of a man in tattered, scanty clothes, with unkempt hair and white, wild face. The sexton did not know that he had ever seen him before, but he looked long after him, wondering at his wildness and his haste.

In his fluttering rags, without hat or cloak, not knowing what strange thing had happened to him, King Robert rushed to his palace gates, pushed aside the startled servants, and hurried, blind with rage, up the wide stair and through the great corridors, toward the room where he could hear the sound of his courtiers' voices. Men and women servants tried to stop the ragged man, who had somehow got into the palace, but Robert did not even see them as he fled along. Straight to the open doors of the big banquet hall he

made his way, and into the midst of the grand feast there.

The great hall was filled with lights and flowers; the tables were set with everything that is delicate and rich to eat; the courtiers, in their gay clothes, were laughing and talking; and at the head of the feast, on the king's own throne, sat a king. His face, his figure, his voice, were exactly like Robert of Sicily; no human being could have told the difference; no one dreamed that he was not the king. He was dressed in the king's royal robes, he wore the royal crown, and on his hand was the king's own ring. Robert of Sicily, half naked, ragged, without a sign of his kingship on him, stood before the throne and stared with fury at this figure of himself.

The king on the throne looked at him. "Who art thou, and what dost thou here?" he asked. And though his voice was just like Robert's own, it had something in it sweet and deep, like the sound of bells.

"I am the king!" cried Robert of Sicily. "I am the king, and you are an impostor!"

The courtiers started from their seats and drew their swords. They would have killed the crazy man who insulted their king; but he raised his hand and stopped them, and with his eyes looking into Robert's eyes he said, "Not the king; you shall be the king's jester! You shall wear the cap and bells, and make laughter for my court. You shall be the servant of the servants, and your companion shall be the jester's ape."

With shouts of laughter, the courtiers drove Robert of Sicily from the banquet hall; the waiting-men, with laughter, too, pushed him into the soldiers' hall; and there the pages brought the jester's wretched ape, and put a fool's cap and bells on Roberts' head. It was like a terrible dream; he could not believe it true, he could not understand what had happened to him. And when he woke next morning, he believed it was a dream, and that he was king again. But as he turned

his head, he felt the coarse straw under his cheek instead of the soft pillow, and he saw that he was in the stable, with the shivering ape by his side. Robert of Sicily was a jester, and no one knew him for the king.

Three long years passed. Sicily was happy and all things went well under the king, who was not Robert. Robert was still the jester, and his heart was harder and bitterer with every year. Many times, during the three years, the king, who had his face and voice, had called him to himself, when none else could hear, and had asked him the one question, "Who art thou?" And each time that he asked it his eyes looked into Robert's eyes, to find his heart. But each time Robert threw back his head and answered, proudly, "I am the king!" And the king's eyes grew sad and stern.

At the end of three years, the Pope bade the Emperor of Allemaine and the King of Sicily, his brothers, to a great meeting in his city of Rome. The King of Sicily went, with all his soldiers and courtiers and ser-

vants, — a great procession of horsemen and footmen. Never had been a gayer sight than the grand train, men in bright armor, riders in wonderful cloaks of velvet and silk, servants, carrying marvelous presents to the Pope. And at the very end rode Robert, the jester. His horse was a poor old thing, many colored, and the ape rode with him. Every one in the villages through which they passed ran after the jester, and pointed and laughed.

The Pope received his brothers and their trains in the square before Saint Peter's. With music and flags and flowers he made the King of Sicily welcome, and greeted him as his brother. In the midst of it, the jester broke through the crowd and threw himself before the Pope. "Look at me!" he cried; "I am your brother, Robert of Sicily! This man is an impostor, who has stolen my throne. I am Robert, the king!"

The Pope looked at the poor jester with pity, but the Emperor of Allemaine turned to the King of Sicily, and said, "Is it not rather dangerous, brother,

to keep a madman as jester?'" And again Robert was pushed back among the serving-men.

It was Holy Week, and the king and the Emperor, with all their trains, went every day to the great services in the cathedral. Something wonderful and holy seemed to make all these services more beautiful than ever before. All the people of Rome felt it: it was as if the presence of an angel were there. Men thought of God, and felt his blessing on them. But no one knew who it was that brought the beautiful feeling. And when Easter Day came, never had there been so lovely, so holy a day: in the great churches, filled with flowers, and sweet with incense, the kneeling people listened to the choirs singing, and it was like the voices of angels; their prayers were more earnest than ever before, their praise more glad; there was something heavenly in Rome.

Robert of Sicily went to the services with the rest, and sat in the humblest place with the servants. Over and over again he heard the sweet voices of the choirs

chant the Latin words he had heard long ago: "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted them of low degree." And at last, as he listened, his heart was softened. He, too, felt the strange blessed presence of a heavenly power. He thought of God, and of his own wickedness; he remembered how happy he had been, and how little good he had done; he realized that his power had not been from himself, at all. On Easter night, as he crept to his bed of straw, he wept, not because he was so wretched, but because he had not been a better king when power was his.

At last all the festivities were over, and the King of Sicily went home to his own land again, with his people. Robert the jester came home too.

On the day of their home-coming, there was a special service in the royal church, and even after the service was over for the people the monks held prayers of thanksgiving and praise. The sound of their singing came softly in at the palace windows. In the great

banquet room, the king sat, wearing his royal robes and his crown, while many subjects came to greet him. At last, he sent them all away, saying he wanted to be alone; but he commanded the jester to stay. And when they were alone together the king looked into Robert's eyes, as he had done before, and said, softly, "Who art thou?"

Robert of Sicily bowed his head. "Thou knowest best," he said, "I only know that I have sinned."

As he spoke, he heard the voices of the monks singing, "He hath put down the mighty from their seat," — and his head sank lower. But suddenly the music seemed to change; a wonderful light shone all about. As Robert raised his eyes, he saw the face of the king smiling at him with a radiance like nothing on earth, and as he sank to his knees before the glory of that smile, a voice sounded with the music, like a melody throbbing on a single string: —

"I am an angel, and thou art the king!"

Then Robert of Sicily was alone. His royal robes

"ROBERT OF SICILY BOWED HIS HEAD"

were upon him once more; he wore his crown and his royal ring. He was king. And when the courtiers came back they found their king kneeling by his throne absorbed in silent prayer.

THE DAGDA'S HARP

You know, dears, in the old countries there are many fine stories about things which happened so very long ago that nobody knows exactly how much of them is true. Ireland is like that. It is so old that even as long ago as four thousand years it had people who dug in the mines, and knew how to weave cloth and to make beautiful ornaments out of gold, and who could fight and make laws; but we do not know just where they came from, nor exactly how they lived. These people left us some splendid stories about their kings, their fights, and their beautiful women; but it all happened such a long time ago that the stories are mixtures of things that really happened and what people said about them, and we don't know just which is which. The stories are called *legends*. One of the prettiest legends is the story I am going to tell you about the Dagda's harp.

The Dagda's Harp

It is said that there were two quite different kinds of people in Ireland: one set of people with long dark hair and dark eyes, called Fomorians — they carried long slender spears made of golden bronze when they fought — and another race of people who were golden-haired and blue-eyed, and who carried short, blunt, heavy spears of dull metal.

The golden-haired people had a great chieftain who was also a kind of high priest, who was called the Dagda. And this Dagda had a wonderful magic harp. The harp was beautiful to look upon, mighty in size, made of rare wood, and ornamented with gold and jewels; and it had wonderful music in its strings, which only the Dagda could call out. When the men were going out to battle, the Dagda would set up his magic harp and sweep his hand across the strings, and a war song would ring out which would make every warrior buckle on his armor, brace his knees, and shout, "Forth to the fight!" Then, when the men came back from the battle, weary and wounded, the

Dagda would take his harp and strike a few chords, and as the magic music stole out upon the air, every man forgot his weariness and the smart of his wounds, and thought of the honor he had won, and of the comrade who had died beside him, and of the safety of his wife and children. Then the song would swell out louder, and every warrior would remember only the glory he had helped win for the king; and each man would rise at the great table, his cup in his hand, and shout, "Long live the King!"

There came a time when the Fomorians and the golden-haired men were at war; and in the midst of a great battle, while the Dagda's hall was not so well guarded as usual, some of the chieftains of the Fomorians stole the great harp from the wall, where it hung, and fled away with it. Their wives and children and some few of their soldiers went with them, and they fled fast and far through the night, until they were a long way from the battlefield. Then they thought they were safe, and they turned aside into a vacant

castle, by the road, and sat down to a banquet, hanging the stolen harp on the wall.

The Dagda, with two or three of his warriors, had followed hard on their track. And while they were in the midst of their banqueting, the door was burst open, and the Dagda stood there, with his men. Some of the Fomorians sprang to their feet, but before any of them could grasp a weapon, the Dagda called out to his harp on the wall, "Come to me, O my harp!"

The great harp recognized its master's voice, and leaped from the wall. Whirling through the hall, sweeping aside and killing the men who got in its way, it sprang to its master's hand. And the Dagda took his harp and swept his hand across the strings in three great, solemn chords. The harp answered with the magic Music of Tears. As the wailing harmony smote upon the air, the women of the Fomorians bowed their heads and wept bitterly, the strong men turned their faces aside, and the little children sobbed.

Again the Dagda touched the strings, and this time

the magic Music of Mirth leaped from the harp. And when they heard that Music of Mirth, the young warriors of the Fomorians began to laugh; they laughed till the cups fell from their grasp, and the spears dropped from their hands, while the wine flowed from the broken bowls; they laughed until their limbs were helpless with excess of glee.

Once more the Dagda touched his harp, but very, very softly. And now a music stole forth as soft as dreams, and as sweet as joy: it was the magic Music of Sleep. When they heard that, gently, gently, the Fomorian women bowed their heads in slumber; the little children crept to their mothers' laps; the old men nodded; and the young warriors drooped in their seats and closed their eyes: one after another all the Fomorians sank into sleep.

When they were all deep in slumber, the Dagda took his magic harp, and he and his golden-haired warriors stole softly away, and came in safety to their own homes again.

"ONCE MORE THE DAGDA TOUCHED HIS HARP"

DAVID AND GOLIATH

A long time ago, there was a boy named David, who lived in a country far east of this. He was good to look upon, for he had fair hair and a ruddy skin; and he was very strong and brave and modest. He was shepherd-boy for his father, and all day — often all night — he was out in the fields, far from home, watching over the sheep. He had to guard them from wild animals, and lead them to the right pastures, and care for them.

By and by, war broke out between the people of David's country and a people that lived near at hand; these men were called Philistines, and the people of David's country were named Israel. All the strong men of Israel went up to the battle, to fight for their king. David's three older brothers went, but he was only a boy, so he was left behind to care for the sheep.

After the brothers had been gone some time,

David's father longed very much to hear from them, and to know if they were safe; so he sent for David, from the fields, and said to him, "Take now for thy brothers an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp, where thy brothers are; and carry these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and see how thy brothers fare, and bring me word again." [An ephah is about three pecks.]

David rose early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took the corn and the loaves and the cheeses, as his father had commanded him, and went to the camp of Israel.

The camp was on a mountain; Israel stood on a mountain on the one side, and the Philistines stood on a mountain on the other side; and there was a valley between them. David came to the place where the Israelites were, just as the host was going forth to the fight, shouting for the battle. So he left his gifts in the hands of the keeper of the baggage, and ran into the army, amongst the soldiers, to find his brothers.

When he found them, he saluted them and began to talk with them.

But while he was asking them the questions his father had commanded, there arose a great shouting and tumult among the Israelites, and men came running back from the front line of battle; everything became confusion. David looked to see what the trouble was, and he saw a strange sight: on the hillside of the Philistines, a warrior was striding forward, calling out something in a taunting voice; he was a gigantic man, the largest David had ever seen, and he was dressed in armor, that shone in the sun: he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders; his spear was so tremendous that the staff of it was like a weaver's beam, and his shield so great that a man went before him, to carry it.

"Who is that?" asked David.

"It is Goliath, of Gath, champion of the Philis-

times," said the soldiers about. "Every day, for forty days, he has come forth, so, and challenged us to send a man against him, in single combat; and since no one dares to go out against him alone, the armies cannot fight." [That was one of the laws of warfare in those times.]

"What!" said David, "does none dare go out against him?"

As he spoke, the giant stood still, on the hillside opposite the Israelitish host, and shouted his challenge, scornfully. He said, "Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am I not a Philistine, and ye servants of Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together!"

When King Saul heard these words, he was dis-

mayed, and all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were sore afraid. David heard them talking among themselves, whispering and murmuring. They were saying, "Have ye seen this man that is come up? Surely if any one killeth him that man will the king make rich; perhaps he will give him his daughter in marriage, and make his family free in Israel!"

David heard this, and he asked the men if it were so. It was surely so, they said.

"But," said David, "who is this Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" And he was stirred with anger.

Very soon, some of the officers told the king about the youth who was asking so many questions, and who said that a mere Philistine should not be let defy the armies of the living God. Immediately Saul sent for him. When David came before Saul, he said to the king, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

But Saul looked at David, and said, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine, to fight with him, for thou art but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth."

Then David said to Saul, "Once I was keeping my father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after the lion, and struck him, and delivered the lamb out of his mouth, and when he arose against me, I caught him by the beard, and struck him, and slew him! Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this Philistine shall be as one of them, for he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

"Go," said Saul, "and the Lord be with thee!"

And he armed David with his own armor,— he put a helmet of brass upon his head, and armed him with a coat of mail. But when David girded his sword

upon his armor, and tried to walk, he said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I am not used to them." And he put them off.

Then he took his staff in his hand and went and chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had; and his sling was in his hand; and he went out and drew near to the Philistine.

And the Philistine came on and drew near to David; and the man that bore his shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him, for David was but a boy, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And he said to David, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with a cudgel?" And with curses he cried out again, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

But David looked at him, and answered, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and

with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hands; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel! And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

And then, when the Philistine arose and came, and drew nigh to meet David, David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And when he was a little way from him, he put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and put it in his sling, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in the forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead; and he fell on his face to the earth.

And David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and

took his sword, and drew it out of its sheath, and slew him with it.

Then, when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. But the army of Israel pursued them, and victory was with the men of Israel.

And after the battle, David was taken to the king's tent, and made a captain over many men; and he went no more to his father's house, to herd the sheep, but became a man, in the king's service.

THE END

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